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The Icelandic Canadian

Vol. 9

Winnipeg, Man. Summer 1951

No. 4

The Announcement of the Chair of Icelandic in the University of Manitoba

March 30th, 1951 will mark one of the most important milestones in the history of the Icelandic people of North America. That evening Dr. A. H. S. Gillson, President of the University of Manitoba, announced that the university was establishing a Chair in Icelandic Language and Literature in the fall of this year for the academic season 1951-2 and that vigorous plans were going forward to find the first incumbent of the Chair. The main part of Dr. Gillson's address appears elsewhere in this issue.

The temptation to make comments on this achievement both personal and representative of the almost unanimous opinion of the Icelandic people, is very great. But no matter how objective such comments may be, they are liable to be misconstrued and the criticism made that they are over enthusiastic and lacking in fair and comparative analysis.

It is therefore much more appropriate to let others be the spokesmen. Their thoughts and actions, it may be assumed, are based upon reasoning and objective assessment. This outside opinion can be inferred from the publicity which agencies such as the press and the radio gave in providing a setting for the occasion and featuring the president's announcement. It can be seen even more clearly in the significance given to the new chair in government and university circles and in the educational value placed upon the

Icelandic language and Icelandic literature by men of letters in different parts of the world.

When the editors-in-chief of the two Winnipeg dailies, The Winnipeg Tribune and Winnipeg Free Press, were informed of what was to take place at the Playhouse Theatre they at once offered space on the editorial page and gave instructions to the city editors that due publicity be given to the important event. It was arranged that it was to be covered in its three aspects—the joint recital by the visiting artists from New York, Maria Markan and Helga Sigurdson, special features of the campaign for the raising of the Fund and the cultural significance of the establishment of the Chair. All this was most willingly carried out.

The Canadian Press, with its network of newspapers across Canada, asked for the necessary information for a four hundred word release for the evening papers of March 30, with a brief follow up after the announcement. Newspapers from all over Canada published the main part of the evening release and made appropriate reports the morning after the announcement. The following are typical examples of the two press releases:

The Montreal Daily Star, Friday, March 30, 1951

ICELANDERS FOUND COURSE

— A fond dream of Manitoba's 15,000 citizens of Icelandic descent — a chair

of Icelandic language and literature at the University of Manitoba—will be realized today.

Icelanders who look on their mother tongue as a classic language on a par with Latin and Greek tonight will hear Dr. A. H. S. Gillson, president of the university, formally announce establishment of the new department.

The children of Icelandic settlers who trekked to the west shore of Lake Winnipeg 75 years ago to farm and fish, contributed the bulk of \$155,000 which has been placed on deposit at the university to finance the Chair.

A \$200,000 endowment to put the chair on a self-sustaining financial basis is planned.

The Icelanders living in Manitoba are the largest Icelandic group in the world outside of Iceland. The province is generally regarded as the centre of Icelandic influence and culture in North America. Another 10,000 Icelanders are scattered throughout Canada and the United States.

Courses to be offered by the new department are expected to attract students who are taking advanced English or are interested in the classics which are basic to modern Western languages. Students of Icelandic descent will have facilities for intensive study of their mother tongue.

A major undertaking of the department will be the study of Old Norse, one of the root languages of English, which has been preserved in Iceland for more than 1,000 years. It is said to differ no more from modern Icelandic than the language of Shakespeare differs from modern English.

Dr. P. H. T. Thorlakson, chairman of the committee sponsoring the enterprise, said establishment of the chair is more than a tribute to the Icelandic people.

"It is recognition of the claim of Old

Icelandic as one of the chief classical languages of western Europe", he said.

The Vancouver Daily Province, Saturday, March 31, 1951:

ICELANDIC LANGUAGE CHAIR ESTABLISHED

—Dr. A. H. S. Gillson, president of the University of Manitoba, Friday announced establishment of a chair of Icelandic language and literature at the university.

Before an audience of 1600 Dr. Gillson said: "We are meeting to set in motion that final act which will establish for all time this ancient culture of Iceland as a living force in the development of our beloved country, Canada."

NEWS ROUND UP

The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation decided of its own accord to put the announcement of the chair on the News Round Up the very evening when the announcement was being made. The News Round Up follows the 9 o'clock evening news (C.S.T.) and is very widely listened to all over Canada and the northern States. The C.B.C. has a short wave department and the report, with changes only in the introduction, was repeated on the overseas short wave which has a coverage extending over Europe and many other parts of the world. The following is the News Round Up report:

Introduction

Tonight, Friday March 30, Dr. A. H. S. Gillson, president of the University of Manitoba—is announcing the establishment of a Department of Icelandic Language and Literature at the university.

The announcement is the climax of a movement which began three years ago when prominent members of Manitoba's Icelandic Community de-

cided that the time had come for their mother tongue and literature to be taught at Manitoba's University. They established a public fund and invited subscriptions to it for the purpose of endowing an Icelandic Chair at the university. One of the leaders of the movement is Judge W. J. Lindal of Winnipeg, a native of Iceland who was brought to Manitoba by his parents when just one year of age. Here he is to tell us of the events leading up to this evening's announcement.

W. J. Lindal

Icelanders started to come to Canada about 75 years ago. Some settled on the shores of Lake Winnipeg. Others moved west and took up homesteads in wild bushland and on untrod prairie.

The 15,000 Icelanders now living in Manitoba are the largest group in the world outside of Iceland, and this province is generally regarded as a centre of Icelandic influence and culture in North America.

But getting back to the pioneers—as they toiled, they made a resolution and they dreamt a dream: a resolution that their children would get an education and make a contribution to the building of this their new homeland—a dream that some day a place of learning could be provided where their language and literature could be preserved.

The pioneers could see in such an institution much more than a home for another modern language. Anglo-Saxon and Old Icelandic—Norse as it is sometimes called—are the two root languages of modern English.

Icelandic is a classic language. It is often said that a person does not fully understand grammar until he has studied one of the classics.

The pioneers performed their task. Their descendants are con-

tributing their quota of leaders in the professions, in business and indeed in all walks of life.

What about their dream? Through the joint effort of the Icelandic people from coast to coast, \$150,000 (more than £50,000) has been collected for the establishment of an Icelandic Chair at the University of Manitoba. For example, a bachelor living on a homestead in Saskatchewan, with no family of his own to benefit, gave two thousand dollars.

The new department is expected to attract students who are taking advanced English as well as those of Icelandic origin who will want to give intensive study to their mother tongue.

The dream of the pioneers has come true.

Interest very general

The announcement of the Chair was featured in the news items on all four Winnipeg radio stations and some other stations on March 30, and the following morning.

The event at the Playhouse Theatre was under the distinguished patronage of the Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba, Hon. R. F. McWilliams, and Mrs. McWilliams, the Premier of the province, Hon. D. L. Campbell and Mrs. Campbell and the following: Hon. Thor Thors, Iceland's Minister to Canada and the United States, and Mrs. Thors, Mr. Justice A. K. Dysart, Chancellor of The University of Manitoba, Dr. A. H. S. Gillson, President and Vice-Chancellor of The University of Manitoba, and Mrs. Gillson, Mr. Victor Sifton, Chairman of the Board of Governors, The University of Manitoba, and Mrs. Sifton, Hon. W. C. Miller, Minister of Education, and Mrs. Miller, Mr. Garnet Coulter, K.C., Mayor of Winnipeg, and Mrs. Coulter, Mr. Laurence C. Frank, American Con-

sul-General, and Mrs. Frank, Mr. Grettir L. Johannson, Consul for Iceland and Denmark, and Mrs. Johannson.

Most of the members of the Board of Governors of the University attended as well as a number of leading educationists of Winnipeg.

As already stated the address of Dr. Gillson appears elsewhere in this issue and with it the Introductory Remarks of Dr. P. H. T. Thorlakson, chairman of the Foundation Committee. Space does not permit the reproduction of the letters read by Dr. Gillson but the following excerpts show the interpretation given by these distinguished educationists to the establishment of the chair.

. . . It is fitting, for obvious geographical and ethnical reasons, that The University of Manitoba should have a strong department of Icelandic Studies. Other Canadian universities will recognize that primacy and send to The University of Manitoba students who desire to share the wealth of Icelandic culture. . .

Sidney Smith,

President. University of Toronto

. . . The Great literature of Iceland which is far and away the greatest legacy which has been left to us by the Northern Nations, has never received the attention in the English-speaking world of which it is worthy. Since old Icelandic was spoken over half of England in the days of King Canute, we might be accused of a certain lack of appreciation of our own ancestors.

C. Venn Pilcher

Bishop Coadjutor
of Sidney, Australia

As a Professor of English, I can bear witness to the importance of Icelandic studies for workers in the English field.

My own scholarly career would have been impossible without the knowledge of Icelandic which I was able to obtain by a year's residence in Iceland. The literature of Old and Middle English cannot be studied with full success without some acquaintance with Icelandic literature and a knowledge of the Icelandic language is indispensable to every successful student of the history of the English language. . .

Kemp Malone

Professor of English
John Hopkins University

. . . in my opinion there is no country or place outside of Iceland where a university chair of Icelandic could more appropriately be founded. Any student who has to learn the language before he can understand and appreciate Icelandic literature (which would usually be his objective) will have facilities for doing so there which are not to be found elsewhere except in Reykjavik. . .

William A. Craigie

University of Oxford, England

As was to be expected this was an occasion for rejoicing in Iceland. The following cablegrams were received.

Reykjavik, March 30 '51

Dr. P. H. T. Thorlakson
Winnipeg, Manitoba.

The Government of Iceland extends felicitations to Vestur-Íslendingar on the establishment of a Department of Icelandic in the University of Manitoba and expresses its appreciation of the contribution which has in this way been made to the preservation of Icelandic culture in America.

Steingrímur Steinþórsson
Prime Minister

Reykjavik, March 30 '51

Dr. P. H. T. Thorlakson
Winnipeg, Manitoba.

The National League sends to you

all sincere good wishes on the occasion of the announcement of the Chair in Icelandic.

Sigurgeir Sigurðsson
Ófeigur Ófeigsson
Kristján Guðlaugsson
Sigurður Sigurðsson
Porkell Jóhannesson

Substance and felicitations were combined in this letter.

Legation of Iceland
Washington, 6, D. C.
March 27, '51

Dr. Thorbjörn Thorlakson
Winnipeg Clinic, Winnipeg.
Dear Dr. Thorbjörn Thorlakson:

It is a great pleasure to me to be able to inform you that the Government of Iceland has decided to donate \$5,000.00 towards the establishment of a Chair in Icelandic Language and Literature in the University of Manitoba. Enclosed is a draft for this amount.

The Government and the people of Iceland wish every success to this institution which has become possible

through the ready sacrifice, the zeal and efficiency of you all.

With kindest regards

Yours Sincerely

Thor Thors

When one views in retrospect the event of March 30, it becomes so abundantly clear that it is much more than the fulfillment of the dreams of the Icelandic people, precious as that is to us all. It is more than an important event in the history of education in Manitoba. As Dr. Gillson said with such clarity of vision, the chair will be "the centre from which all agencies working for the preservation of Icelandic culture on the North American continent will draw life and inspiration." "But", Dr. Gillson added, "to me even this is only the means to a further end of much wider spiritual significance."

Those words are a challenge for the future and ample compensation for all efforts of the past.

W. J. L.

IN THE NEWS

Dr. E. T. Felsted who has spent the past two years in Europe doing post graduate study and research in medical radiology, sailed early in May for Canada. While in England, the Winnipeg doctor studied radiological physics at the Royal Cancer hospital in London, radiographic technique at the Ilford Company laboratories, diagnostic radiology at the British Post-graduate Medical Federation and in the diagnostic radiology department of St. Mary's Medical School hospital, London. He was awarded the Diagnostic Radiology diploma in April. Dr. Felsted attended the International World Radiology conference in London, the Internat-

ional Cancer Society conference in Paris and Radio Physiological conference in Stockholm. It is expected that he will continue research work in Canada. Dr. Feldsted is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Eggert Felsted of Winnipeg.

★

CROWNED QUEEN, AT YOUTH FESTIVAL

Miss Marion Johnson, of High River, Alta., was crowned Queen of the Western Canada Youth Conference recently. Marion is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Clifford Johnson of High River. Grandparents are the late Thor-dur Johnson, and his wife Mrs. Gudny Johnson of Winnipeg.

Dr. Niels Finsen, Discoverer of Artificial Sunlight

By Hjalmur and Holmfridur Danielson

Would that you would meet the sun and the wind
with more of your skin and less of your raiment.
For the breath of life is in the sunlight,
and the hand of life is in the wind.

—From "The Prophet", by Kahlil Gibran



see the top-most pinnacle, the 'Witch's Finger', swathed in sunlight and limned against the darker expanse of the northern sky, as if pointing out to him the full implication of the power of sunlight over earth and heaven.

The boy is Niels Ryberg Finsen. At this moment a feeling of warmth, well-being and contentment steals over him, and he sensed the pulsations of renewed energy around him as the world comes to life in motion and song. The memory of this sunrise will be carried with him when he leaves his native land in the autumn, to go to school in Denmark. But little does he dream that all this wonderful light that floods his visible world will be the source of his life's work and will lead him to fame! He does not know that, in it, he is destined to discover a new scientific method for healing the sick, that he will be the founder of machine medicine, and that ultimately the world will bestow upon him its greatest honor,—the Nobel Prize!

Neither does he see the shadow that, even in the brilliant sunshine, is creeping upon his own manhood,—the shadow of the ravages of lifelong ill health, which will take its early toll, but which can never for a moment swerve his energies from his tireless, and often, thankless task of delving into the mystery of light to prove to a skeptical medical profession that it may be death's most powerful antagonist.

A frail looking boy of fourteen, is standing on the beach on the east side of Strömoy (Stream Island), the largest of the Faroe Islands. He is waiting for the summer sun to rise above the ocean's rim, where there is a clear view north of Nolsoy, between the islands. As he waits expectantly, fleecy white clouds floating lazily in the eastern sky, gradually take on the rosy tints of morning, the sun's fiery disc slowly emerges above the horizon, and all the world bursts into golden glory. The sea, too, takes on a new enchantment as a glittering golden pathway sweeps across it from the horizon to his very feet. Looking north to the highest mountain on East Island the lad can

Niels Finsen was born December 15, 1860 at Thorshaven, the capital of the Faroe Islands. His father, Hannes Kristján Steingrímur Finsen was Icelandic and his mother, Johanna (Fro-mann) Finsen was Danish. She died when Niels was four years old and a few years later his father married again.

Hannes Finsen was 'Civil Governor (Amtmaður), Judge and Provost of the Faroe Islands, of which seventeen of the twenty islands, were at that time populated by 26,000 people of Norse origin with some Irish and Scottish. After a short period of independence, the islands were attached to Norway until 1814 when Denmark ceded Norway to Sweden but retained the Faroe Islands. The language of the islands was originally Norse and still retains a marked similarity to Icelandic.

Life in Thorshaven had been pleasant and exhilarating for Niels whose introspective, poetic nature responded deeply to the charm of the great out doors. Here he could roam about the hills and valleys at will, watching the birds. He could lie on the rocks and listen to the symphony of the sea in all its varied moods; or he could go sailing between the islands with his father. He would spend long hours fashioning useful and ornamental articles from wood or bone, for he was most skilful and dexterous with his hands. He found it delightful to sail his own boat which he had made by burning out a great piece of square-timber, bought with his own pocket money, and rigged with beautifully trim sails.

As he painstakingly carved his initials, 'N.R.F.', on a great column of basalt, he could not foresee that some day that massive pillar would be moved to one of the main streets of Thorshaven, which was named after him, there to be fashioned into a monument in his honor; nor could he dream that

beautiful and imposing monuments would one day be erected in Copenhagen to commemorate the achievements of the brilliant scientist and great humanitarian, Niels Ryberg Finsen.

In his childhood, Niels had been fascinated when listening to the Icelandic sagas, which his father often related to the older children. The tragic saga of Sigmundur Brestison, of the Faroe Islands, had brought tears to his eyes, but his imagination was kindled to a rich glow by the story of Thorkell Máni. Perhaps because of his own, as yet undefined, affinity for the strange mystery of sunlight. Niels could understand the reasoning of this pagan son of a Viking, who when he was about to die, asked to be carried outside onto a sunny spot, and as he passed away, committed his soul into the keeping of the God who had created the sun!

It was a drastic change for Niels when, at the age of fourteen, he was placed in a boarding school at Herlúfshólme in Denmark. In this alien environment he was lonesome, homesick and ill at ease. It seemed to him that now he had lost everything: his mother, his contact with his people and his country, with its song birds, hills, valleys and wide horizon. The land in Denmark was too flat, too uninteresting, and the horizon seemed to close in on him. His reserved independent spirit rebelled against the strict discipline and tedious routine of studies at the school, and the other boys teased him because he was so different from them. Besides, he was not physically strong, and owing to all these factors seemed unable to apply himself to his studies, and failed in his class.

o o o

Niels' grandmother in Iceland having offered to give him board and

lodging, his father decided to send him to the Grammar School in Reykjavík. He sailed for Iceland August 11, 1876, with a short stop over at his home in Faroe Islands.

His grandmother, was the widow of Ólafur Finsen, who had been Chief Justice and Civil Governor in Iceland, when he died at the age of thirty-nine. Maria Finsen had been a widow for forty years when Niels came to her, but she had not forgotten how to mother a sensitive, lonesome lad, and give him the comforts of home. Once again Niels could enjoy life out in the open air, in an environment similar to that of his own country. He could explore the treeless hills and valleys, and listen to the same song birds. He could ride a fleet-footed pony out over the moors, and go sailing and shooting, which were his favorite recreations.

At first Niels was handicapped in his work at the Grammar School, because he could not speak the Icelandic language. Furthermore, he still did not seem to apply himself wholeheartedly to his studies, preferring to spend much of his time on investigations of various natural phenomena, which had always had a special interest for him, and on stuffing and mounting birds and animals which he had shot. To encourage him in his school work his grandmother would point out that he had a great family record to live up to.

"Your great grandfather", she said, "was Hannes Finnsson, Bishop at Skálholt, and his father Finnur Jónsson, also a bishop at Skálholt, was the son of another famous man, Jón Hall-dorsson, the author of four volumes of church history. Your uncle Dr. Jón Finsen did some remarkable research and made discoveries regarding cysts in animals. Your cousin, Hilmar Finsen is the Governor of Iceland and an-

other cousin, Vilhjálmur Finsen, is Iceland's representative to Sweden".

No doubt this history of his eminent forbears impressed Niels and had the desired effect of inducing him to give more attention to his school work. There is no doubt that he mastered the Icelandic language, as after several years in Iceland, he wrote to his brother, Olafur, that "I now speak Danish with an Icelandic accent."

During the winter of 1882 an epidemic of measles spread all over Iceland, and Niels, as well as many of the other students, contracted the dread disease. Final examinations were delayed until July, and Niels, who had not fully recovered received an average mark of only 73, which was considered rather low.

The University of Iceland was not established until 1911, so in common with other Icelandic students who aspired to a university education, Niels now entered the University of Copenhagen. Being now rated as an Icelandic student he had the privilege, according to arrangements with Denmark, of securing free lodgings at "Garði", the students' residence at the University of Copenhagen. This privilege was not generally enjoyed by Danish students, at least for the first years of their term, and then only by outstanding students.

Perhaps Finsen's independence of spirit and unorthodox methods of studying had been intensified by his sojourn in Iceland. Paul De Kruif, in his book "Men Against Death", expresses this rather spectacularly when he says: "The Icelandic ex-Vikings had the absolutely unique system of teaching Finsen to believe nothing but what he found out for himself . . . and how he took to it!"

In any case Niels persisted in spending much of his time on investigations that to orthodox scientists seemed futile

and childish. When his own body was more than usually racked with pain, there seemed to be a special urgency about his research and he would drive himself relentlessly almost day and night. When utterly worn out he would relax by indulging in a little painting or drawing, or listening to good music, of which he was very fond.

On the other hand, when he was well enough he enjoyed taking part in sports and going on outdoor excursions. He frequently went sailing or shooting with his fellow students. With three other students from the Faroe Islands he bought a boat, repaired it and rigged it with sails and a deck. On his sailing trips he would take a drawing book with him and sketch the scenery and wild life around him.

By this time Niels' father had moved to Denmark, having been promoted to a position as 'Stiptamtmaður' at Ribe. On one of his vacations Niels organized a shooting competition at their home. Among the guests were the two daughters of Bishop Balslev, Elisabet and Ingeborg. When Elisabet won first prize, Niels, being a very keen sportsman, showed that he was not too pleased to be beaten by a girl. Perhaps this incident induced him to spend much time during the next few months at the ranges at Amager. Some time later he became the champion marksman of the Scandinavian countries at the shooting meet in 1889.

The Finsen and Balslev families frequently went on sailing trips on the Ribe river. These were happy times with much gaiety, singing and talking. During the winter vacations the young people enjoyed skating and dancing, with Ingeborg and Niels spending much of their time together, and in 1889 their engagement was announced. They were not married, however, until 1892, two years after Niels graduated

as a doctor of medicine, and was established in his work as assistant professor of anatomy at the University of Copenhagen.

° ° °

For three years Dr. Finsen contented himself with acting in the capacity of prosecutor at the University; and here in 1893 in the little city of Copenhagen, he was poor, unknown, and often ill. But he had keen powers of observation, a keenly developed faculty for investigation, a rare intelligence and an indomitable will in spite of his almost constant physical suffering.

While yet a student, he had begun those investigations and experiments which were destined to make him famous, and at the same time his inventive genius found scope in devising an improved breech-gun, a new cooking apparatus, cool summer houses, and later a variety of hematine lozenges. At the Anatomy College in Copenhagen they still use a dissecting knife invented by him. His investigations started in a small attic of the old Surgical College building. Sophus Bang, a fellow student, believed with him that a complete revolution in therapeutics was necessary. When they both became ill, Bang went to Switzerland to strive to regain his health, and later became one of the foremost anatomists of Europe. But Finsen stayed on in Copenhagen to conduct his researches in its foggy and cold atmosphere.

The effect of sunlight on all living things had for a long time possessed a special interest for Dr. Finsen. Through experiments he had been able to ascertain the effects of the sun's rays upon some animals, and from personal experience he knew the depressing effects of sunless days, as he unfortunately had a room with a northern exposure at "Garði". Whenever

(Continued on Page 53)

The Writer and the Librarian

by MORRIS BISHOP, Cornell University

Obviously, a book does not exist until it is read. Until then it is a dead thing. It is simply an object like any other object. But reading is a creative act; every reader brings the book to life in his own hands. By that act he does the same as a musician does with a piece of music. A printed score is not music. It is not music until the musician plays it; and a book is not really a book until some person takes it and acts it in his own imagination. It is often very surprising to the author to discover what the reader has done with his book in his re-creation of it. There are cases in literary history in which the intention of the author, at least his understood intention, what he thought to be his intention, has been completely altered by the readers who have found in it things which he did not consciously put into it, although he may have done so unconsciously.

In short, we are together. The author needs you as you need the author. Perhaps you could get along without the author (although you would find it

difficult to deal solely with the classics) but the author certainly cannot do without the librarian. He can hardly exist without the service which you render him.

Thus we are united in a common faith. The serious writer is moved by some mysterious impulse to record his thoughts and his dreams in some form which may have at least the look of permanency. He does it often in spite of himself. He does not know why he does it. I often think that you can tell the writing man from the non-writing man by the fact that the writing man can hardly be checked from doing his work, regardless of reward. When someone says to you that he is planning to do some writing some time, he is going to write a book, but he has to buy a farm first or he has to get a certain kind of desk to write on, I think you may assume that he is not a writing man. There is a demon, a **daemon**, in certain people which makes them authors, whether or not they ever find any readers.

And you, I think, likewise regard the Book as the repository of understanding, of wisdom, of beauty, of knowledge; and I think I may safely say that that is true of all of you; and it is a very rare and precious experience to be in the presence of people of such a common faith. For if you did not have such a faith, I cannot conceive that you would be librarians. You would not be willing to spend your lives checking in and checking out, imposing five-cent fines, rubbing out the pencil marks and interpolations which you find in your books. That is the drudgery of your profession, which you accept because you feel somehow that dealing

(Dr. Bishop, who is a professor in the department of Romance Languages, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, gave this inspiring address at the fifth annual conference of the Canadian Library Association held in Montreal, June 9-15, 1950. Dr. Bishop's discerning analysis of the situation in the field of literature, in the United States and Canada will appeal to the readers of the Icelandic Canadian, as will his significant figures on the output of literature in Iceland, and the high percentage of sales. The article, with the deletions of the French passages and the poetry quotations, is reprinted here by permission of the Canadian Library Association.

In his reference to outstanding Canadian authors, Dr. Bishop mentions also several French Canadians, including Gabrielle Roy, Roger Lemelin, Germaine Guèvremont, and others, but as this paragraph was also in French, it is deleted. —Editor.)

with books is a more worthy and satisfactory form of life than to go into the paint, oil and varnish business or into any other of the businesses which may have beckoned to you.

Well, what is the situation of the book writer today? On the whole, it is not very brilliant; that is, the situation of the serious writer of serious books. There are not many in the United States or Canada today who can make a living by the writing of books. Writers go into all sorts of accessory occupations, into teaching, journalism, plenty of other trades. Notice that there is a distinction to be made between the writer of books and the writer of magazine articles. The magazines have the money, of course, because they have the circulation. Many writers of books make their living by magazine writing; but the magazine has little appeal for the serious writer because of its evanescence and because he somehow feels that he wants to enclose his thoughts in the ancient and traditional form of the Book.

The book business is a poor one, despite the best seller. Of course anyone who can write a series of best sellers makes a very good living. However, that is a hard thing to do, and if you are not included in that small list you can hardly expect more than the most modest competency. The book business as a whole is a picayune affair in the United States. I have been told by a bookman that the entire book trade of the United States, that is, the trade-book business, which excludes educational and technical books and things of that sort, amounts to just about one third of the total business done by one department store in New York.

Thus the situation of the serious book writer in the United States is far from happy.

How about the Canadian writer? I must defer to the Canadian writers who are present, but I suspect there are few writers in this country who can make a living from their books. There is Mazo de la Roche, certainly; there may be others. Possibly Hugh MacLennan; I don't know about his personal affairs. There is Thomas Costain, of course, but he is an American citizen by this time. He is a Brantford boy, as you possibly know. So was I; but he went to the Victoria School and I went to The Central, so I never met him. . . .

The book writer has a hard time. As far as that goes, he always has had a hard time, and he has always complained bitterly. Milton received only five pounds down and five on account for *Paradise Lost*, and no doubt he had many hard words to say about the public. Perhaps it is a good thing for an author to suffer. Out of his suffering he draws the life blood from which he makes his books. His pain is our profit. It makes me think of the pelican in the poem of Alfred de Musset. You remember, the poet is the pelican who tears open his breast in order to feed the public with the fruit of his own pain. Well, the public generally has very little taste for pelican breast and shows him small gratitude. . . .

No, the situation is a hard one for the author. And the reason is an obvious one. It is that Americans in general are not book buyers nor even book readers. They do not love books, they are afraid of books.

Of course, I do not claim that all books deserve to be loved. A lot of them are terrible; they do not deserve to be called books at all. . . .

I think I have established that the author, at least the serious author, has a hard time; he always has had. I claim further that despite all our talk about

literature the people of the United States, and I suspect of Canada too, are not devoted readers of the book. You may protest against that. To sustain my claim let me point to the example of a country where the book is not regarded as an ornament but rather as a necessity of life. That country is Iceland.

The population of Iceland is 130,000. Its language is not spoken and is hardly read anywhere outside of Iceland, except in a few small settlements in the United States and Canada. So we have a possible reading public of only 130,000. That works out well for purposes of comparison because in Canada the population is 13 million, exactly a hundred times as much, and in the United States the population is 140 million, a little over a thousand times as much.

I have obtained from an Icelandic friend of mine the publishing statistics for 1946, the most recent that he could find. In that year over 600 books were published in Iceland. If you keep the same ratio for Canada and the United States, you would have published in one year 60,000 books in Canada, and in the United States we would have published 600,000. I haven't the figures for Canada, but in the United States we published last year 10,892 books; in 1946 we published less than 10 thousand. In Iceland in the year 1946 they published 44 volumes of poetry, all but one of which were written by natives. In proportion then you should have published 4,400 books of poetry and in the United States 44,000 books of poetry. I don't say that this would be entirely a good thing. Indeed, it is staggering to think of the amount of frightful poetry that would have been published. In fact, we published in 1949 just 85 volumes of poetry. That is, with a population a thousand times

as great, we offered to the public just twice as many volumes of poetry as did Iceland.

In Iceland in 1946 147 volumes of fiction were published. Of these 21 were written by natives. Canada should then have published 14,700 novels, the United States 147,000. In fact, we published 1,644 novels in 1949. The largest publishing house in Iceland produced 65 books in 1946. That would be a very respectable figure for a New York publisher.

Perhaps the most significant figures are those of sales. In Iceland, the average sale of a novel is about 2,500; 4,000 is regarded as a good sale. As a matter of fact, 4,000 would be regarded as a good sale by a lot of authors in the United States. In Iceland poetry sells between 1,500 and 2,000 copies; a sale of only a thousand is counted a failure. But only about a dozen of the 85 volumes of poetry published in the United States in 1949 reached a sales figure of 1,000. Poetry is doomed from birth in our Republic. In Iceland, scholarly books on Icelandic cultural history sell between 3,000 and 5,000. Think of that! That means that one out of every thirty inhabitants of the island not only reads such a book in the library but he buys a copy for himself!

My own book on Champlain might fall into the classification of native cultural history. It sold 3,097 copies in the United States and 719 in Canada. If we had the same ratio of book-buyers to population here, it would have sold five million copies. I might better move to Iceland to find a public.

This set of comparisons seems to me very striking. It indicates what a real book-reading and book-buying population is. It suggests that the saturation point of books in Icelandic life is about a thousand times higher than in our own countries. It hints alarmingly that

our own lands are by comparison cultural wastes.

The ominous aspect of this comparison is that there seems to be no visible relationship between cultural literacy and higher education. In Iceland the young do not attend the University almost automatically, as they do with us; they obtain their culture without benefit of university training. But in the United States, where everyone goes to college, we have evidently not succeeded in implanting in the young respect for the wisdom and beauty contained in books.

In the United States we have two and a half million students in our universities and other institutions of university level. That means that one in five of the young people of college age are now in college. This fact brings up innumerable problems with which I cannot now deal, but what now concerns me, as it does you, is the fact that literally millions of people have taken our courses in literature, especially English literature, and they have emerged from these courses with the fixed determination never to read another book. We have told them that the book is our best means of understanding man and his world. We have told them that the book contains beauty responding to our esthetic cravings, inspiration for our moments of spiritual ardor, solace for hours of distress. The students faithfully copy down these words and pass our examinations, repeating our words more or less correctly, and they take these precious books and sell them to a second-hand dealer for 25 cents apiece.

With millions of students in our college classes, we have convinced only a small proportion of the truth of the faith we hold. The problem is a very serious one. Either something is wrong with the faith we profess, or with

those of us who profess the faith and who have somehow alienated the people we want to convert or with the people to whom we preach our faith. Again, that is a problem for which I do not have time, nor am I at all certain that I know the answer.

One thing is clear. One of the most striking phenomena of our time is the vast commercialized popularization of information, opinion, and amusement. This is directed towards readers, by means of cheap and unlovely magazines, comic books, and so on. And particularly toward listeners, by means of the Machine. The Machine is operated by a large group of extremely intelligent men who make a great deal of money by what seems to me nothing but the debauching of the public mind. Their whole purpose is to make money; they make money by giving the public what it wants. You may say that there is nothing immoral about that, and perhaps in fact there is nothing immoral in giving the public what it wants. However, the result is that they make the public want what they give, and inevitably they reduce the small intellectual content of the things they give in order to reach the lower level of their mass audience and capture the greatest number.

I am reminded of one of the maxims of the advertising world: no one ever went broke by underestimating the intelligence of the American people.

Perhaps at this point I should make an apology to Mr. Lambert and the CBC. I am not speaking of the CBC nor the BBC, who are aware that they have an obligation toward the people as well as to their stockholders. I am referring only to the commercialized radio of the United States, which has no other purpose than to make money for its companies and its sponsors. It does pay lip-service to culture with cer-

tain specialized programs, but these are relatively unimportant. I must confess further that I do not speak of the present state of broadcasting with much authority, since two years ago I took my radio out into the garage and chopped it up with great satisfaction.

Popularization in itself is not evil, but it contains within itself the seeds of evil. The popularizer is always trying to make things easy, simple, understandable. There is a danger here. For difficult things are difficult and you cannot make them simple. Paul Valéry said: "L'esprit clair fait comprendre ce qu'il ne comprend pas." There is a fine word for it in French which we ought to have in English: **Simplisme**, the making of difficult things simple. But as soon as you make a difficult thing simple, you falsify it, you turn it into something else. You cannot make hard things easy. To reduce difficulty to ease is in itself an absurdity.

This **simplisme**, this distortion of truth, abets, I think, a false ideology of our time, an alluring ideology which seduces many by its specious charms.

No, I am not referring to Communism. Indeed, despite the somewhat hysterical outpourings of certain statesmen, I don't see that Communism is much of a menace to the American or Canadian people today. Twenty years ago it was possible for the young idealist to be allured by the promises of Communism. But today these promises are so thoroughly proved to be false that they can hardly appeal to any but the perverse. Certainly very few of our people would willingly exchange the freedoms they now possess for the subjections offered by Sovietism.

No, the menace is not Communism. It is mediocrity. Mediocrity of mind, mediocrity of spirit, mediocrity of the soul. Mediocrity self-satisfied and proud, happy in its solidarity with uni-

versal mediocrity, contemptuous of the rare and exceptional, fortified with the applause of mediocrity which sounds from the radio. This mediocrity has behind it enormous commercial power, which deals in mediocrity, which sells its mediocrity to us for its commercial purposes. It is a mechanical war on man, for the machine is the great instrument in this attack on our mental health. The effort of education has always been, must always be, to train men to think, in the hope of understanding. To think and to understand we must have leisure and silence, for inevitably thought is solitary and difficult. . .

Recueillement, incidentally, is another of those fine words for which there is no equivalent in English. It is the Latin *recollectio*; it means the ingathering of one's thoughts in a mood of peaceful reflection. One of the strange things about our psychology is that we have never found it necessary to take over this precious word.

Recueillement and silence for thought are our present need. Noise in our ears, noise in our spirits, is characteristic of our day. We like the noise, because it silences thought. Many people are afraid of silence. They are terrified if the radio goes off; they feel somehow deserted, suddenly exposed to the demons of silence, of thought. They must have the constant babble of this imbecile occupant of their household in order to feel at ease. Reality lies in wait; but reality can be banished by turning on the radio and submerging oneself in a soft wave of perfumed glue.

And now, comes television. And television seems to me the worst of all the threats to the human spirit. You should congratulate yourselves that you do not yet have it in Montreal; and I congratulate myself that in my little

city of Ithaca we are surrounded by high hills that have so far defended us from the invasion of the air-borne enemy. But it will come; and while I cannot speak of my own knowledge because I have never done more than stare in momentary incredulity at a television screen, I have heard plenty of what it is doing. I have seen statistics, and you have too, about the disastrous effect on school children of exposure to the idiot world which has invaded their homes. It threatens not only education but it seems to me that it threatens the mind itself. For while you can at least listen to radio with half an ear, television demands and obtains all your attention.

In this parlous state of affairs you have your duty, as the writer has his. The duty of the librarian is to fight the disease of mediocrity, to encourage the inquiring mind, the mind which seeks something it does not find in mechanized distraction nor in the literature of escape as it is presented in the cheaper magazines. Your duty is to welcome such people, however peculiar and unlovely they may sometimes appear, and to encourage them in the dissatisfaction, which has commonly been called divine. I think it is divine, because it

is only by that kind of dissatisfaction, that mysterious hunger for hidden, elusive truth, that men have advanced at all, that civilization has made any kind of progress. No discoveries have been made, no wisdom has been attained, under the narcotic influence of the radio.

Silence and reflection, *silence et recueillement*, are our friends; and, at the present moment at least, the radio and the machines of the robot world are, by and large, our enemies.

The writer has his duty too. His duty is not to yield to the temptations of this slothful, pudgy god of mediocrity. His duty is to serve a more mysterious god in a secret temple, difficult of access. This god is not rich and he gives few rewards to his adorers. This is the god of truth.

The writer's duty is to *faire vrai*, again to choose one of the fine French phrases, to "make true". To do not only the best he can but a little better than he can; to try to add to the sum of wisdom and understanding and beauty there is in the world.

Librarian and writer, we are all on the same side. We are all hand in hand against the barbarian.

THE ICELANDIC CANADIAN

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Dr. Gillson Announces Establishment of Icelandic Chair



The following are the main parts of the address given by Dr. A. H. S. Gillson, president of the University of Manitoba, at the Playhouse Theatre, Winnipeg, on Friday, March 30, 1951.

It is not often in the short span of a single life that one has the opportunity of being connected with an event of heroic dimensions. Generally our celebrations are connected with events, long since passed, but this gathering here tonight on March 30th, 1951, is one of those rare occurrences which itself will often be celebrated and remembered in the years ahead. . . .

As an undergraduate I had, through the translations of William Morris and others, come under the spell of the literature of the Sagas, the literature which the late Lord Tweedsmuir has called "the noblest literature ever produced by mortal man", and to which on the occasion of his visit to Gimli in 1936 he referred again as "among the chief works of human

genius". Since my first visit to Gimli I have experienced the same thing in other parts of Manitoba, but repetition does not dim the vividness of the experience of finding in Manitoba the ancient Icelandic culture, vigorous and alive, a dynamic element in contemporary life. . . .

It is clear, however, that as time passes this grandeur and living force would tend to slowly disappear on the North American continent, and even in this Province, in spite of the fact that in this city there live more Icelanders than in any other city of the world, with the exception of the Capital of Iceland itself. It is fundamental that something shall be done to preserve this great heritage not only for Canadians of Icelandic origin but for all Canadians.

Tonight we are meeting here to set in motion that final act which will establish for all time this ancient culture of Iceland as a living force in the development of our beloved country, Canada. You all know that I am referring to the establishment of the Chair of Icelandic Language and Literature in the University of Manitoba. . . .

This project has been a tremendous undertaking, for while it is true that the largest Icelandic group in the world outside Iceland is in Manitoba the size of that group is very small, being only about 15,000 strong, with possibly another 10,000 scattered throughout Canada and the United States of America.

Yet, this group in Manitoba, consisting of doctors and fishermen, judges and farmers, merchants and teachers, set itself the objective of rais-

ing \$200,000 to endow in perpetuity this Chair of Icelandic Language and Literature in the University of Manitoba. Tonight we are gathered together to report that the goal is now in sight. . . .

Contributions of \$1,000 and upwards have come in from Manitoba, Saskatchewan, British Columbia and Ontario and even beyond the borders of Canada, from North Dakota, and several points in the United States. The two largest are from Mr. A. P. Johansson who donated \$50,000 and Mr. and Mrs. J. D. Eaton of Toronto who donated \$18,000.

This has entailed tremendous and continuous work on the part of members of the campaign committee who have used each other's leisure hours in the weekends and whenever they could get the time to travel, at their own expense, explaining to members of the Icelandic community the ideals behind this great project and asking for substantial aid. Literally nothing has daunted these countrymen of Leifur Erikson, for at this moment there is in deposit in the University of Manitoba the great sum of \$155,000, \$20,000 more having already been promised of the remaining \$45,000 to be obtained.

On February 15, 1949, a Trust Deed was executed by the University of Manitoba in which it was stated:—
"If, on or before June 17th, 1952, the Endowment Fund shall amount to, or be of the value of, not less than \$150,000:

(a) The University shall, on or before June 17th, 1952, establish a Chair of Icelandic Language and Literature within the Faculty of Arts and Science of the University, as a Department of such Faculty, with the object of providing courses of instruction and promoting studies and research in the field of Icelandic Language and Literature.

(b) The University shall on or before June 17th, 1952, create a Professorship of Icelandic Language and Literature, and shall from time to time appoint a suitably qualified specialist in Icelandic Language and Literature, whose duties shall include the conduct and direction of such classes and courses of study in Icelandic Language and Literature as the Senate of the University may from time to time determine.

(c) The University shall maintain the said Department so far as the income of the Endowment Fund shall permit, on a basis comparable in every way with that of other departments in the Humanities established in the University.

(d) The income of the Endowment Fund arising after the establishment of the Chair of Icelandic Language and Literature shall be applied by the University, firstly in payment of the salary of the said Professor of Icelandic Language and Literature, and secondly, so far as the same will thereunto extend and the Board of Governors of the University may in their discretion authorize, in providing such additional teaching assistance as the extent of instruction offered by the said Department may warrant, and such books, materials and library service as may be deemed by the Board of Governors of the University necessary or desirable for the purposes of the said Department.

The university shall provide opportunity to the Professor of Icelandic Language and Literature, to engage in extra mural lecturing and other extension work in Icelandic Language and Literature, to such reasonable extent as may be undertaken without interference with his normal duties, and as may be from time to time authorized by the University. The

extension work may include lectures in the Province of Manitoba and elsewhere, as may be from time to time authorized by the University."

On December 2, 1950, the Comptroller of the University reported to me that funds in the hands of the University amounted to \$150,153.90, and it was clear that the University was then obligated to establish the Chair.

The announcement that I wish to make tonight is that the University of Manitoba is establishing the Chair of Icelandic Language and Literature in the fall of 1951 for the academic session 1951-52, and that vigorous plans are now going forward to find the first incumbent of that Chair.

This is not going to be an easy task, for he must be a scholar, that is clear, but he must also be a man who through writing and lecturing, both in Icelandic and English, both in the University and throughout the Province, will generate great interest in all things, Icelandic, not only amongst Canadians of Icelandic descent, but also amongst Canadians of other origins.

Thus we have come almost to the end of one phase but equally are we commencing another. It is the intention of the University to set up an Advisory Committee on Icelandic Studies, the members of this committee to consist not only of men on the teaching staff of the University, but also representative members of the Icelandic community with the President of the University as Chairman. In this way will the University be kept in touch with the thoughts and desires of the Icelandic Canadian community, so that as the Department develops it may fulfill its function completely.

There is one other thing I must mention. The University is at the present time about to build a University

library. In that library will be a museum, and it is our strong desire that a collection of objects, antique and modern, will be built up which will preserve for all Canadians those things of beauty and utility which you and your forefathers used. The spiritual value for succeeding generations of such a collection taken in conjunction with the unique Icelandic library of our University, cannot be overestimated.

What is expected from this venture? Certainly under-graduate study of Icelandic Language, Literature and History leading into post-graduate work in English, Icelandic and Germanics generally. This is the very minimum, but this I am sure would not be regarded by any of us as enough. Surely another ideal and aim is that there will be thus established for all time the centre from which all agencies working for the preservation of Icelandic culture on the North American continent will draw life and inspiration. But to me even this is only the means to a further end of much wider spiritual significance.

My hope would be that because of the establishment of this Chair the resulting study of the history and literature of this noble people who through the ages have coupled an intense feeling for individual personal freedom with fearlessness and high courage, there would be a lasting contribution to the moral and spiritual strength of Canadian life.

If this were even partially fulfilled then are we all this night taking part in an event whose grandeur and inner meaning could only be described by the nameless saga-men of long ago.

A. H. S Gillson
President,
University of Manitoba

Introductory Remarks

By **Dr. P. H. T. Thorlakson** on the occasion of the announcement of the Chair in Icelandic Language and Literature in the University of Manitoba



Most of us here this evening are Canadians of Icelandic descent. In this large audience are many Canadians of other origins. The exact origin of people and their language is for the most part lost in antiquity. However, on good authority we know that Europe was invaded about 7000 years ago by a people who came up from the Northwest of India.

Philologists tell us that from the language spoken by this primitive people developed the Indo-European group of languages which form the basis of all the modern languages of Europe except four, namely, Finnish, Hungarian, Turkish and Basque. A dictionary of 2200 root words has been compiled from these ancient languages. Old Greek preserved 67 per cent of the Indo-European root words, Latin 49 percent, whereas Icelandic, that ancient and classic language still spok-

en by the people of Iceland, has preserved over 57 per cent.

Iceland, that little island in the North Atlantic, was largely colonized by people from Norway, many of whom had lived for years in the northern parts of the British Isles. The Icelandic people therefore are of Norse, Irish and Scottish ancestry.

These colonists of 874 A.D. took with them to Iceland the language commonly spoken at that time in Northern Europe and in over fifty per cent of England. This old basic and classic language with its famous Sagas and Eddic poems has been faithfully preserved through the centuries by the people of Iceland.

Another noteworthy contribution by the people of this small nation was in the founding of a representative form of government and in the making of laws for the protection of the rights of the individual. When in 1930 the Icelandic nation was celebrating the 1000 anniversary of its parliament, Lord Stanley of Great Britain acknowledged this contribution. He said that he had come to represent the Mother of Parliaments and also to salute and pay tribute to the Grandmother of Parliaments.

In September 1936 the late Lord Tweedsmuir, then Governor-General of Canada spoke to a group of citizens in the town of Gimli who were descendants of the people of old Iceland. To them he said: "You have become good Canadians, and have shared in the enterprises and struggles of this new nation, and at the same time I rejoice to think that you have never

forgotten the traditions of your homeland." He went on to say that a strong people is made not only by accepting willingly the duties and loyalties of their adopted country, but also by bringing their own native traditions as a contribution to the making of Canada.

It is the hope of the Founders that the establishment of the Chair in Icelandic Language and Literature at the University of Manitoba will make a contribution to the cultural and educational life of Canada. This department of the University will teach an ancient basic language with its wealth of

classic and modern literature, will strengthen the department of English because Icelandic is basic to the Anglo-Saxan portion of the English language and will provide a stimulus to research in comparative philology . . .

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At the conclusion of his address Dr. Thorlakson on behalf of the Founders, thanked Dr. Gillson, President of the University and the members of the Board of Governors for their interest and encouragement, and the artists, Maria Markan and Helga Sigurdson, who came from New York to entertain at the concert.

Award Winners

DOCTOR OF MEDICINE



Glen Alan Lillington graduated in Medicine from the University of Manitoba was awarded the University Gold Medal in Medicine and the Manitoba Medical Association Gold Medal. Dr. Lillington also won along with Gerald S. Varman the Chown Prize in surgery \$25.00 and a gold medal. This young man has been a consistent scholarship winner throughout his scholastic career, as has been featured in the Icelandic Canadian Magazine, see June issue, 1950. He is the son of H. A. Lil-

lington and Kristjana (Johnson) Lillington, of Winnipeg.

★

LICENTIATE IN MUSIC



Thora Solveig Asgeirson, was awarded the University Gold Medal in Music (piano). We have followed Thora's distinguished career in music, and all the awards which she has won with interest, and they have been featured in the Icelandic Can. on all occasions. She is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Jon Asgeirson, of Winnipeg.

The Riverton Study Group

(Editor's note: The following report is reprinted from the last issue of the annual publication of the Icelandic National League 'Tímarit'. Readers of the Icelandic Canadian, many of whom have made enquiries regarding the possibility of organizing study groups along the lines of the 'Icelandic Canadian Evening School', and have received from us information and lesson plans as well as Icelandic language lessons, will be glad to read about the remarkable success of the Study Group at Riverton, Man., and about how the members have enthusiastically kept up this cultural work, ever since it was organized four years ago.)

First Year 1947-48

Our 'Study Group' was organized October, 9, 1947, by Mrs. Holmfríður Danielson, the cultural representative of the Icelandic National League. She explained the purpose of such groups and the work that had been done in Winnipeg during the last three years by the Icelandic Canadian Club.

The 9 ladies present at the organization meeting all became members. Everyone was in favor of studying **ICELAND'S THOUSAND YEARS** during the first year. A discussion leader was appointed to be in charge of each lecture, and at each meeting one lecture was read, discussed and supplemented with additional material by group members themselves. The members took turns at having meetings in their homes, and the discussion period was followed with singing, a social period and delightful refreshments.

Our enrollment increased to 18 members, which is too large a group, as there is not the same possibility of giving each individual a chance to take part in discussions. Ten to twelve members seems to be about right. There were 14 meetings held the first year, and two of the members had a perfect attendance.

We felt that we were much wiser,

and better educated after having had the opportunity to study **ICELAND'S THOUSAND YEARS**, and learning what our forefathers had to contend with, and we understood many things that had been very 'foggy' before. And it was the unanimous wish of the group members to continue this interesting experiment for another year.

Second Year, 1948-49

Eight members were present at the first meeting, Oct. 12, 1948. Several new organizations were under way in Riverton that fall and competition for people's time and energy would be keen, but we were determined to carry on. We had received from Mrs. Danielson, an outline of the work done by the Icel. Canadian club study group during their third and fourth years of study, which included study of some of the Icelandic pioneer districts in this country, and a study of our Icelandic Canadian authors.

The majority of the members were in favor of studying the history of the Icel. pioneers in our own community, and elsewhere. For source material we used Þ. Þ. Þorsteinsson's book 3, Jackson's book, and several issues of the Icelandic Canadian. At meetings we also took notes on interesting pioneer incidents related by our older members. For these we are particularly indebted to Mrs. Sigrún Sigvaldson and Mrs. Valdheiður (Briem) Ford. Sometimes members were able to correct errors appearing in one of these books, for example the statement that Ramsay, (well-known Indian friend of the Icelanders) had not been able to speak much English. He was married to an English speaking woman, the daughter of a Hudson's Bay Co. factor,

and likely spoke much better English than any of the Icelanders. Many stories are told about Ramsay's worthy wife who lost her life in the small-pox epidemic and is buried at Sandy Bar.

At the second meeting, Nov. 17, we studied about the 3 original village sites in the Icel. colony: Gimli, Sandvík (Sandy Bar) and Lundi, changed to Riverton in 1914 with the coming of the railroad. This was intensely interesting and we concluded by reading G. J. G's. immortal poem 'Sandy Bar'. During this lesson many stories about the Indians, never printed, were brought up and the name, White Mud River, now Icelandic River, brought to mind. There is not scope in this report to let you know how we appreciated the interesting and informative discussions about our own community.

Next we studied about the Icel. pioneers in Utah. At one of our meetings we had a guest, a social welfare worker, who seemed most interested in our work. We were telling her about the Sacred Temple of the Mormons in Salt Lake City. While taking her holidays this lady went to Salt Lake City, and saw this famous Temple, and she gave us a fine account of it. At this stage we used certain issues of the Icelandic Canadian a great deal, as they contain a large number of excellent articles on the Utah pioneers, and especially on their descendants; and we certainly feel a lot closer to our kinsmen across the border in Utah, who would be completely lost to us if it were not for those articles.

We studied the Icelandic pioneers of Brazil. As we had 2 non-Icelandic members, three of our group undertook to summarize and translate interesting facts from the available material (*Saga Íslendinga í Vesturheimi*, and *Æfintýrið frá Íslandi til Brasilíu*, by Þ.

Þ. Þ.) First we studied the reasons for choosing Brazil, and the conditions in Iceland which led to this emigration. At one of our meetings we used Thorgeirson's Almanac, 1916, and are grateful to the publishers for the loan of it. We really enjoyed our 'venture into Brazil' but felt sorry that the few families from Iceland were so soon engulfed in the mixed population of Brazil.

We studied Washington Island next, and here again we were helped out by the publishers of Thorgeirson's Almanac (1900). This article was summarized and enjoyed at the last meeting of the second year.

The course for the next year was left undecided, but a resolution was adopted to try to memorize and recite some Icelandic poetry at some of the meetings. We would be most happy to get an Icelandic film, as Riverton has its own projector.

Third Year, 1949-50

The first meeting was held Nov. 2 and this time the members voted in favor of studying poetry and short stories by Icel. Canadian writers: J. M. Bjarnason, Dr. S. J. Johannesson, G. J. Guttormsson and Jón Runolfson. We were fortunate in getting "Sextíu Æfintýri" by J. M. B. and later his first book of poetry. At the December meeting we read all the Christmas stories in this book. Poems of J. M. B. were also read, and "Halley's Halastjarna" by 'Þorskbítur', which is very well written and took us back to the star-gazing of 1911-12.

At the Jan. meeting the life story of J. M. B., by Dr. J. P. Palsson was read and discussed, and some of us added incidents from our own store of memory.

At the February meeting (Feb.1),

we had a very full program. Eleven members were present, in spite of the ladies' curling. Two of the members arrived a little late and out of breath as they came from a curling match.

We touched on the possibility of re-organizing the chapter "Ísafold", and later an attempt was made to call a meeting, but without much success. Then there was some discussion of the possibility of the study group taking over the 'deild', but we were not clear on whether that could be accomplished without injury to either organization, and there the matter rests.

At this meeting two stories from "Sextíu Æfintýri" by J. M. B., were read. 'Ari litli fer á skóla', and 'Drengurinn sem var altaf að gráta'. The author upholds the Icel. nationality and heritage in all his stories, and we

are proud of this. Several of the author's poems were also read, all very good and with an element of kindness running through them.

The real highlight of the evening was a travelogue by Miss Skúlason, on her trip to Miami, Florida, at the beginning of the year. This was very interesting and many of us wished we had been in the sunny south for at least two weeks of this coldest January in 75 years. Our hostess had a number of pictures from Florida, which made it easier to understand the beauty of the vegetation and scenery.

We now have an enrollment of 12 members, and the attendance is excellent. We hold our meetings once a month now.

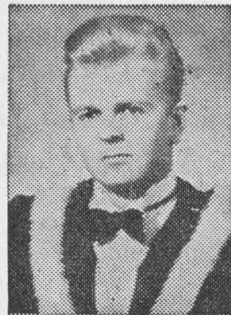
Kristin S. Benedictson

Study group Sec.

Award Winners



Betty Jane McKenty, B.A. was awarded the University Women's Club School Scholarship of \$150.00. She is the daughter of Dr. Jack McKenty and his wife the former Inga Tergesen. See Icel. Can. June 1950.



Kenneth Ralph Einarson, B.Sc., was awarded the Governors Gold Medal in Agriculture, Son of Mr. and Mrs. Harry Einarson, Gimli, Man.

INSTITUTE CHAIRMAN

Flying Officer **A. B. Finnbogason** has been elected president of the United Services Institute of Manitoba.

Election was held Friday, May 25th, at H.M.S.C. Chippawa. Allan is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Guttormur Finnbogason of Winnipeg.

WAR SERVICE RECORD



Sgt. John Sigfus Gillis



Pte. Richard Freeman Gillis

SGT. JOHN SIGFUS GILLIS—Born at Gardar, N. D., Sept. 7, 1918. Enlisted in R.C.E.M.E. June 1942. Trained at Camp Barrie, Kingston, Ont., and Fort Knox, Kentucky, U.S.A. Served at Camp Borden, Ont.

PTE. RICHARD FREEMAN GILLIS—Born at Gardar, N. D., November 17, 1916. Enlisted August 1942 in the Regina Rifles. Trained at Regina, Edmonton and Vancouver. Embarked overseas August 1943. Served in England, Africa and Italy. He was wounded in February 1944. Later served in the Tobacco Depot in England. Discharged March 1946.

SONS OF JACOB GISLI AND THORUNN GILLIS, WYNYARD, SASK.



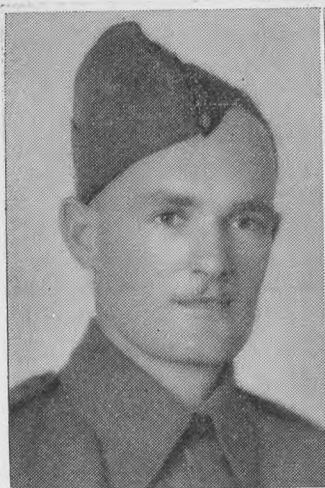
A.B. Bertel Lincoln Gillis

A.B. BERTEL LINCOLN GILLIS



Born at Gardar, N. D., May 21, 1921. Enlisted in R.C.N.V.R. December 4, 1942 at Saskatoon, Sask. Trained at H.M.C.S. Unicorn and at the east coast of Canada aboard H.M.C.S. Stadacona and Cornwallis. He was drafted to H.M.C.S. Antigonish at the west coast and served 13 months in the North Atlantic and Northern Ireland. Discharged at Saskatoon, Sask., October 15, 1945.

Son of Guðnes and Elizabeth (Olgeirson) Gillis,
Wynyard, Sask.



L-Cpl. G. H. Mullins



L.A.C. O. F. Mullins



L.A.C. J. A. Mullins

L.-CPL. GEORGE HAROLD MULLINS—Born April 27, 1918 in St. James, Man. He enlisted in the Canadian Army February 1941, volunteering for overseas duty. Posted to Debert, N. S. Discharged in Winnipeg, Man., 1946.

L.A.C. OLAFUR FRANKLIN MULLINS—Born Jan. 10, 1912 in St. James, Man. Enlisted in the R.C.A.F. Jan. 1943, as instrument mechanic. Discharged in Winnipeg, Man., 1945.

L.A.C. JOHN ALBERT MULLINS—Born March 24, 1923 in St. James, Man. Enlisted in R.C.A.F. July 1941. Served in Canada, England and Northwest Europe. Discharged 1945.

SONS OF MRS. ENA AND THE LATE JOHN ALBERT MULLINS, ST. JAMES, MAN.



Pte. Gisli S. Stefanson

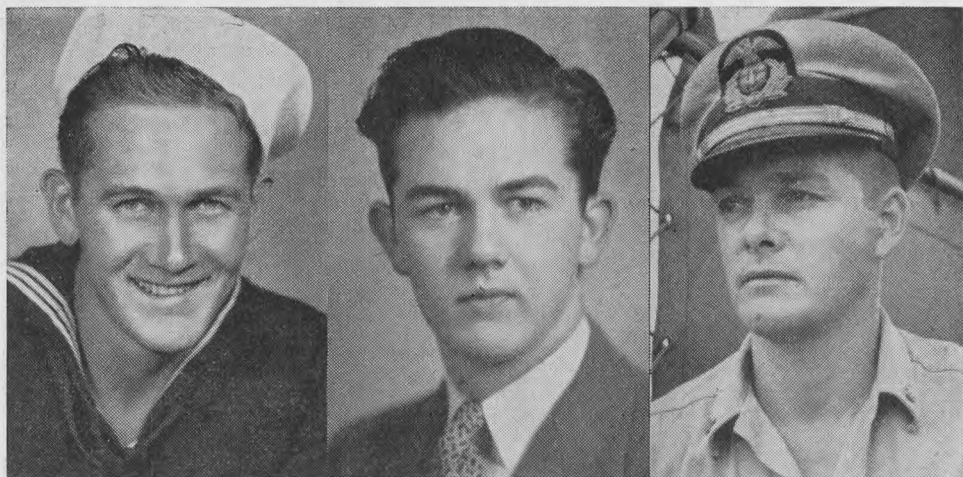
“IN MEMORIAM”



PTE. GISLI S. STEFANSON

Born at Selkirk, Man., April 16, 1910. Enlisted with the P.P.C.L.I. April 1943. Stationed at Fort Osborne Barracks, Portage La Prairie, Shilo, Man., and Debert, N. S. Embarked overseas December 1943. He was in England a short time before going to Italy. He was wounded February 23, 1945 and passed away the same day. He was laid to rest in the 2nd Brigade Cemetery near Bagnacavallo and later reburied in the Ravena British Empire cemetery near Ravena, Italy.

Son of Mrs. Rannveig and the late Stephan G. Stefanson, Selkirk, Man.



S.F. s/c Johann I. Johnson

P.M. 3/c Stephan J. Johnson

Lt. (j.g.) Harold B. Johnson

S.F. s/c **JOHANN I. JOHNSON**—Born Seattle, Wash., November 24, 1915. Enlisted in U.S. Navy. He saw action in the Pacific, North China area.

“IN MEMORIAM”

PHOTOGRAPHERS MATE 3/c STEPHAN J. JOHNSON—Born in Seattle, Wash., March 27, 1925. Joined the U. S. Navy May 1943 and trained in aerial photography. He was attached to the photographic intelligence service unit in Pearl Harbor. He volunteered for submarine photographic missions, participating in the pre-invasion mission to the Philippines. Reported lost on last mission to Ryuku Islands in submarine “Swordfish”. Officially presumed lost Jan. 30, 1946. Awarded the Purple Heart.

LT. (j.g.) HAROLD B. JOHNSON—Born Seattle, Wash., July 18, 1911. Enlisted in U. S. 2nd Merchant Marine. He saw action in Atlantic and Pacific oceans. He participated in the Philippine invasion at Leyte.

P.F.C. INGOLF JOHNSON—Born at Victoria, B. C., August 4, 1907. Enlisted in the Field Artillery of the U.S. Army. He was stationed in the Pacific off the United States coast.

LT.-COL. KARI JOHNSON—Born at Winnipeg, Man., August 17, 1905. He was with the U. S. War Shipping Administration as port representative in the South Pacific-Japan area. He was in charge of Merchant Marine Operations in Cebu and Manila, and Philippines. Thence to Japan in the same capacity with the occupation forces at Yokohama.

SONS OF MRS. JAKOBINA AND THE LATE ISAK JOHNSON, SEATTLE, WASH.



Pte. I. S. Johannesson

PTE. INGVAR SIGURDUR JOHANNESSEN



Born at Wynyard, Sask., April 21, 1920. Enlisted in the Royal Canadian Infantry, April 1943. Transferred to the Brockville Rifles 1944. Served in Regina, Sask., Wainwright, Alta., Sydney, Aldershot, N.S., and Kingston, Jamaica. Discharged Spring of 1946.

Son of Bjarni and Rose Johannesson,
Wynyard, Sask.

Icelandic Canadian Club News

The annual meeting of the Icelandic Canadian Club was held May 21, at the First Federated Church parlors.

A Bequest of \$500.00 to the Club

The president, Wilhelm Kristjanson, announced at the opening of the meeting that in the will of Mr. Bjarni Skaffeld, of La Fleche, Sask., who passed away last January, a bequest of \$500.00 had been made to the Icelandic Canadian club, to further its work of upholding and preserving Icelandic cultural traditions in this country, and in aiding outstanding students in their cultural pursuits.

The members greeted this announcement with a feeling of humble gratitude. It was indeed gratifying to be paid such a high tribute by a man who was personally unknown to the members. A subscriber of the Icelandic Canadian Magazine from its beginning, Mr. Skaffeld had been familiar with the aims and achievements of the club and in such a generous, thoughtful manner, showed his appreciation. It is evident that he has had a profound admiration for Icelandic cultural work, for he also bequeathed \$1,000 to the Chair of Icelandic at the University of Manitoba.

This fine gesture of the late Mr. Skaffeld will indeed be an added incentive to club members to keep up our cultural work and prove worthy of his trust and the confidence he has placed in our ability to use this money wisely and well!

The Year's Activities Reviewed

Following the regular business of discussing current and future plans of activities, the annual reports were read by officials and conveners.

In his report, the president gave a resume of the meetings and social gatherings

held during the year, which were nine in number and included:

The February annual concert; the concert in honor of Prof. S. K. Hall and Mrs. Hall; the annual banquet and dance; the concert at the Playhouse Theatre, March 30, to announce the establishment of the Chair in Icelandic. This concert was sponsored by the Foundation committee, and members of the Icelandic Canadian club, as well as other Founders, organizations, were proud and happy to lend their support to the event by selling their quota of tickets, and by attending in large numbers. All these events have been reported in the magazine.

At the opening meeting of the season, Oct. 23, in the I.O.G.T. hall, Axel Vopnfjord, our past pres., who had for a year been exchange teacher at Aberdeen, Wash., gave a lively and enjoyable talk about his experiences, to a full house of members and their guests. Musical program was given by Robert Publow, vocalist, Allan Beck, violinist, and Garry Stefanson, boy soprano.

The December and January meetings were for members only, with business, games and refreshments. The annual Banquet and Dance at the Marlborough hotel was a fine success. Rev. P. M. Petursson was guest speaker, Inga Bjarnason gave a group of vocal solos and Thora Asgeirson gave piano solos.

At the April meeting held in the First Federated church, Dr. Edward Johnson, superintendent of the Manitoba hospital was guest speaker. He gave the large audience a very informative and thought-provoking address on the development of treatment for mental patients. A double quartet of students from the Provincial Normal

School, accompanied by Sigrid Bardal, sang two groups of songs, surprising and delighting the audience by ending up with the Icelandic number, "Sjáið hvar sólin nú hnígur". None of these students were of Icelandic descent but our vice president J. K. Laxdal, who teaches at the Normal School and arranged for this musical treat, had taught them the words of the Icelandic song so well that their diction was really good.

Mrs. Lena Richardson, convener of the membership committee, announced that there were ten new members this year with a total paid-up membership of 62. She said that the press convener H. F. Danielson had given excellent publicity to all events and activities of the club, and thanked the press and radio for their co-operation. She thanked the corresponding secretary, Mrs. Lilja Robinson for her help in sending out notices.

Mrs. Runa Jonasson, social convener, reported that refreshments had been served at all except two of the meetings and social events. As the members well know, the excellent and cheerfully given services of Mrs. Jonasson and her committee have been a big factor in making our gatherings so jolly and congenial.

Financial Reports:

The treasurer, Miss Villa Eyolfson, reported that early in the year the club had made its last remittance of \$200.00 on the \$1,000 pledge to the Icelandic Chair Fund, and that total disbursement during the year had been \$714.73 with receipts being \$888.37. The balance on hand May 21, 1951, \$173.64.

H. F. Danielson reported that total disbursements in connection with the Icelandic Canadian Magazine were \$2,544.72 with receipts at \$2,736.55. Balance in the magazine account is at

present \$1,765.79. Mrs. Danielson reported that the balance in the book fund (Iceland's Thousand Years) is \$313.28, and in the Scholarship fund, \$100.00.

Report on the Magazine

Mrs. H. F. Danielson, editor, in her report on the Magazine mentioned that a wide assortment of articles featured in the Icelandic Canadian, have been re-printed by other magazines and papers both in this country and in Iceland. As a few examples she cited: A re-print on the editorial pages of the Winnipeg Tribune, of the article on the Icelandic Pioneers in the Swan River district. A lengthy review in the **Winnipeg Free Press**, of Prof. Skuli Johnson's article on Einar H. Kvaran, with several excerpts from the article; the article on Prof. S. K. Hall, with pictures, was re-printed in the **Wynyard Advance** (the cuts loaned by the Icelandic Canadian) and also featured in the **Saskatoon Star-Pheonix**. **Eimreiðin**, in Iceland, and also **Lesbók** Morgunblaðsins, have translated and printed a number of features from the Magazine, including just recently (in **Lesbók**) our interview with Mrs. Gudrun (Borgford) Pestnicak, who had been in Japan for three years. The comics magazine **Superman** published in a recent issue, an article which they called, "Boys who never give up", and which is based on the "Enchanted Coach", featured in our Autumn, 1949 issue.

There are 76 new subscribers this year and during the last few months seven complete sets of the magazine have been sold. Three of the early issues are now almost sold out, and full sets will, in a short time, no longer be available.

The work of the magazine, as well as other efforts of the club, has

widened cultural contacts among Icelanders, and stimulated interest in the history and literature of Iceland among the citizens as a whole. Copies of the magazine and the book, **Iceland's Thousand Years**, have been distributed to visitors who have come to Winnipeg from remote parts of this continent, and who hitherto, knew little or nothing on this subject. "We are still sending on request", said Mrs. Danielson, "Icelandic material, including language lessons and lesson helps, to individuals and study groups in Canada and the United States. I am sure you will be interested in reading, in this issue, of the success of the study group at Riverton, Man.

"We have loaned Icelandic recorded music, together with translations of Icelandic songs, to the Manitoba Department of Education for use in their school broadcasts. We are happy to know that the magazine has done inestimable work in publicizing and promoting the founding of the Chair of Icelandic language and literature, among persons who see no other publication dealing with Icelandic matters."

Mrs. Danielson quoted briefly from a few of the hundreds of letters she has received commending the staff for the high literary standard of the magazine, for the thorough research that goes into the historical material, and for the immeasurable value of the magazine as an organ for preserving our cultural heritage in this country.

Election of Officers

The club is proud to announce the election of Prof. Skuli Johnson as honorary president. Prof. Johnson who is head of the Classics Dpt. at the University of Manitoba has distinguished himself as a student, and in his scholastic achievements. He takes a profound interest in the cultural work of

the club and has written a large number of very fine articles for the magazine. Many of these have been reprinted for distribution by the university.

Axel Vopnfjord is past president, Mr. W. Kristjanson was re-elected as president. Others elected were: vice-president, J. K. Laxdal; secretary, Miss Inga Johnson; treasurer, Miss Villa Eyolfson; executive members at large: Dr. L. A. Sigurdson, Miss Mattie Halldorson, John Myrdal, Mrs. Lilja Robinson and Miss Steinunn Bjarnason.

Committees:

Publicity, H. J. Stefanson and H. F. Danielson; Membership, Mrs. Sigrídur Gunlaugson and Miss Helga Eggertson; Social, Mrs. Runa Jonasson, convener, Mrs. L. Olsen, Mrs. A. Vopnfjord, Mrs. J. Bergman and Mrs. Jennie Jonasson.

Members of the magazine board were re-elected as follows: Editorial staff: Mrs. Holmfríður Danielson, chairman; Judge W. J. Lindal, H. Thorgrímonson, H. J. Stefanson and J. K. Laxdal. News editors, Misses S. Eydal and M. Petursson; War Service Record, Miss Mattie Halldorson; Business manager, Mrs. Grace Thorsteinson; Circulation manager, Hjalmur F. Danielson.

Elected to review the club's constitution were: Judge W. J. Lindal, Axel Vopnfjord and Miss Mattie Halldorson.

A vote of thanks was moved to the editor and magazine staff, to the retiring officers, and all conveners and working committees, and to the president and Mrs. Kristjanson for their generosity and hospitality in entertaining at their home for most of the executive meetings, which were many in number and very well attended, there often being as many as 12 to 14

present when heads of all committees are required to attend. An honorarium of \$250.00 was voted to H. F. Danielson in recognition of his excellent work as circulation manager of the magazine.

Social Hour

The long meeting ended with a gay talk by H. J. Stefanson on the trip that he and Mrs. Stefanson recently took to the Grand Canyon and other points of interest in the States; a beautiful technicolor film on Manitoba;

and as usual delightful refreshments supervised by Mrs. Runa Jonasson and her able committee. The Club had the pleasure of entertaining for the program and lunch, the combined choirs of the First Federated church who had been busily rehearsing all evening in the main auditorium of the church, for a special concert they are holding in aid of the newly rebuilt and re-decorated church.

Altogether it was a very full and profitable evening.

In The News

ELECTED TO IMPORTANT POSITION

Mrs. Richard Beck of Grand Forks, No. Dak., was elected the president of the State Branch of the N. D. Anti-Tuberculosis Association at their annual meeting in April last at Bismark, N. Dak. Previous to being elected president she held the office of vice-president, and conducted the annual meeting.

For the past 8 years Mrs. Beck was the secretary for the Grand Forks Branch of the Association; and had for many years held position on the executive of the State organization, for two years she has served on the executive of the Mississippi Valley Conference.

★

The Icelandic Good Templars of Winnipeg, Hekla and Skuld, together with the Grand Lodge of Manitoba celebrated the centennial anniversary of the International Order of Good Templars, in the I.O.G.T. hall, Winnipeg, Monday April 30th. The principal speaker was Dr. Richard Beck, of Grand Forks, N. D., a member of Hekla Lodge. He spoke on the Ideals and Achievements of the Order

throughout the world, during the past century. Also there was a very interesting musical programme. The meeting was conducted by the Grand Chief Templar Bro. A. S. Bardal. There were about 200 present, and after the programme refreshments were served to all present in the lower auditorium.

★

HEADS PRINTERS

Ald. V. B. Anderson, was re-elected by the Winnipeg Typographical Union as president for the ninth consecutive term.

★

Mr. and Mrs. Stefan Hansen, of Wildwood Park, Winnipeg, left May 18, for Quebec from where they will sail May 25, on the Empress of Scotland for Great Britain and the continent. Mr. Hansen will attend the 13th International Congress of Actuaries to be held in June at the Hague, Holland. Afterwards Mr. and Mrs. Hansen will tour France and Italy before returning home in the latter part of July.

Mr. Hansen is a former member of the editorial staff of the Icelandic Canadian.

The University of Iceland

On the 17th of June this year, the University of Iceland celebrated its 40th anniversary. It was founded in 1911(*) by merging the then existing schools of Theology, Medicine and Law and adding a faculty of Philosophy. Faculties of Economics and Engineering have since been established.

Enrollment at the university has increased from 45 in 1911 to about 600 today. The present teaching staff consists of 26 professors and assistant professors and some 30 part-time lecturers.

As might be expected, great stress is placed on the study of Icelandic language, literature and history and such scholars as Alexander Johannesson, Sigurdur Nordal and the late Páll Egger Olason are recognized authorities in their respective fields. The faculty of medicine has some distinguished members, among them the widely known Dr. Dungal, director of the University's bacteriological-pathological laboratory. A brilliant research worker, Dr. Björn Sigurdsson heads a Veterinary Research Institute, recently built with funds advanced in equal parts by the State and the Rockefeller Foundation.

The University is a State institution and costs of administration and research are met by annual grants from the Treasury. The grant in recent years has been approximately \$240,000, shared equally by the university and the Research Institute.

During its first decades the university was housed in the Parliament building in Reykjavík. In 1940, how-

ever, it moved into a fine modern building of its own and since then a Research Institute, two dormitories, a refectory and a gymnasium have been erected. This ambitious building programme has in large part been financed by the proceeds of a national lottery operated by the University. Yearly profits from this source amount to some \$25,000.

Funds required for scholarship grants and the publication of learned works are provided by various endowments. The largest of these is the Sáttmálasjóður (The Union Fund) established in 1918 with a capital of one million crowns (then \$200,000). To this fund go the profits from a movie theatre known as the University Cinema. This enterprise, managed by the University, pays no entertainment tax or other public taxes. The yearly profit is from \$19,000 to \$25,000.

Under the leadership of such men as its first president, the redoubtable Björn M. Olsen, and the present incumbent, Alexander Johannesson, the University of Iceland has been a major force in the national life. It is the nation's greatest glory. May it long continue to guide the destinies of the young Republic.

H. Th.

GRADUATE IN COMMERCIAL ART

Bjarni Thomas Bjarnason, — graduated with Honors from the Meinzinger School of Art, Detroit, Mich. This young artist has accepted a position with Taber Dalmage and Faehey, Toronto, Ont. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. G. M. Bjarnason, of St. James, Manitoba.

*) Information contained in this article is for the most part based on a small booklet in English by Dr. Alexander Johannesson entitled "The University of Iceland".

Book Reviews

Tímarit Þjóðræknisfélags Íslendinga, Vol. XXXII, 1951, Winnipeg, Man.

The current issue of this annual is devoted entirely to the history and cultural achievements of the Western Icelanders during the last 75 years.

In the year 1875, the Icelanders founded four settlements on this continent, namely Markland in Nova Scotia, Minneota in Minnesota and Winnipeg and New Iceland in Manitoba. Of the four, all but the first named are still thriving. Events leading up to the founding of these early settlements are described in an article by the historian Þorsteinn Þ. Þorsteinsson.

Other articles in this issue deal with our writers, composers and artists. The prose writers and poets are very thoroughly discussed by Professor S. Einarson and R. Beck, respectively. Both are authorities in their field. The composers receive sympathetic treatment from the editor of the *Tímarit*, Mr. Gísli Jonsson. He himself is a composer and a discerning critic and should have been included in this group. The article on our painters and sculptors is written by Mrs. H. Danielson.

This issue of the *Tímarit* contains a great deal of very valuable information about our artists and literary men. This is particularly true of the article on the painters and sculptors, who up to this time have had little publicity given to their efforts, if we except such well known figures as the painter Emile Walters.

Nothing of value has yet been written about our educators, doctors and other professional menn. Here is a task for some bright young man in search of a Masters' degree.

Vagabond, Vol. 1, No. 1, Pauper Press, Winnipeg.

Young and hopeful writers who find it difficult to get their work accepted by old established publications sometimes attempt to remedy matters by publishing their own little magazines in order to get a public hearing. This is all to the good and every now and again one of these upstarts becomes successful and can in turn afford to dispense with the offerings of unknown authors.

Vagabond, described on the title page as the Shoe-string Quarterly Magazine, is the second of its kind to be launched in Winnipeg in the past two years. The first, *Impressions*, was reviewed in these pages last year.

The editor of *Vagabond* is Art Reykdal, a young man who has to his credit a number of poems and sketches that have appeared in the Winnipeg Free Press, The Icelandic Canadian and elsewhere. He is a facile writer and has a sense of humour that would have appealed to the late Bob Edwards of The Calgary Eye Opener. The Canadian public, which abhors levity, may not take kindly to this form of humour and it seems that the editor does not greatly care whether it does or not. He and his associates have nevertheless succeeded in bringing out a promising first issue, one that those who do not take their literature too seriously will find highly entertaining.

Of the original contributions to this issue *The Lark*, an unsigned poem probably written by the editor, is perhaps the best. His short short story, *Three Muskrat Skins*, is also very well written but it is marred by one or two passages that many people will rightly consider objectionable. Other good

items are **The Calf Path**, a poem by Sam Walter Foss, **Muddy Waters**, an amusing sketch by 'Mallard Grouse' and the illustrations by Mary Zabolotny.

It is to be hoped that the presumably limited resources of Pauper Press will suffice to bring us a few more numbers of this gay and unpretentious little journal. Public support for a venture of this kind is hardly to be expected, although the publicity now being given to the Massey Report may temporarily generate some enthusiasm for the endeavors of Canadians in the fields of art and literature.

★

Fruits of the Valley, 128 p.p.
Albert L. Halldorsson, published
by the author. Printed by Columbia Press, Winnipeg.

A few years ago this author published at his own expense a short book of poems entitled **Wings of the Wind**. This time he has written what he describes as "an historic novel" about the

shepherds of Judea and the Wise Men of the East who followed the Star of Bethlehem to the cradle of the Christ-child.

This book is all sweetness and light and bears witness to a simple, child-like faith, rare indeed in our time. These twin qualities of sincerity and goodness give this story a strange charm that gross structural faults and uneven writing can not altogether destroy.

Lack of proper care on the part of the proofreader has resulted in numerous errors in spelling and punctuation. Such mistakes as 'mantel' for 'mantle' and 'Magii' for 'Magi' are hard to justify, worse still is the indiscriminate use of punctuation marks without regard to logic or common usage.

At its worst, *Fruits of the Valley* is a poor novel, at its best it is a tender and moving story on a theme dear to millions of people in many lands.

H. Th.

Saskatchewan Graduates

B.Sc. IN AGRICULTURE

Paul Baldur Gislason, B.A. Wynyard; Stephan Douglas Stephanson, Elfros, Sask.

★

BACHELOR OF ARTS

Kathryn Joan Olafson, North Battleford; August Clare Bjarnason, Froude. Herbert Earle Hornford, Elfros,

★

BACHELOR OF EDUCATION

John McRae Thorlacius, B.A., — Kuroki, Sask.

★

BACHELOR OF HOUSEHOLD Sc.

Corinne Isobel Craddock, Saskatoon, awarded Rutter Scholarship for highest standing in the graduating year of her college.

BACHELOR OF LAW

Walter Paulson, — Secured his B.A. Degree in the fall of 1947 from the University of Saskatchewan, graduate in Law 1951. Son of Paul and Jónína (Borgfjord) Paulson of Foam Lake, Sask. (See soldier section in this issue).

★

B.Sc. IN PHARMACY

Priscilla Maeve Eyolfson, Wynyard.

★

CERT. IN AGRICULTURE

Sigurdur Bergthor Ketilson, Naicam.

★

CERT. IN EDUCATION

Thordis Adalheidur Asgeirsson, B.A. Mozart, Sask.

Shows Loyalty to Good Causes



Mr. Bjarni Skaftfeld who passed away at Regina, Sask., January 26th, 1951, in his will, left a bequest of \$1,000.00 to the Chair of Icelandic language and literature at the University of Manitoba, and the sum of \$500 to the Icelandic Canadian club.

At the time of his death, Mr. Skaftfeld had been living far from any Icelandic community for thirty-seven years but his profound loyalty to the Icelandic cultural heritage had never waned and he chose to show his keen interest in these matters in this most thoughtful and tangible manner.

Bjarni Skaftfeld was born in 1878 at Hátúnum in Landbroti (við Síðu), Kilva hrepp Vestur-Skaftafellssýslu, Iceland. His parents were Hreiðar Bjarnason and his wife Júlíana Magnúsdóttir, who farmed at Hátúnum. Bjarni had been a shoemaker in Reykjavík before emigrating to Canada in 1902. Here he learned the plasterer's trade and worked in partnership with his brothers, Hreiðar and Magnús in Winnipeg prior to moving

to La Fleche, Sask., in 1914 where he was a successful contractor and plasterer until his death. He died at the Grey Nuns Hospital at Regina after an illness of two weeks. Mr. Skaftfeld, who was not married, is survived by three brothers: Hreiðar, in Winnipeg; Sigurdur, at Shaunavon, Sask.; and Magnus, in Vancouver, B. C.; also four sisters in Iceland; Júlía, Katrín, Kristín and Agnes.

All his life Bjarni had been a capable, industrious and methodical worker, and his progressive spirit was manifested in many ways in his work and in his life generally. In his quiet, unassuming way he was a student and an avid reader, keeping abreast of all that he considered best especially in Icelandic literature, both old and new. A marked trait in his character was his loyalty to good causes, and further evidence of this is given by his bequest of \$500.00 to the Icelandic I.O.G.T. Lodge, Skuld (of Winnipeg). During his residence here he was a member of the lodge, and after moving to La Fleche he never failed for these thirty-seven years, to send his annual dues to that organization.

Mr. Skaftfeld was a subscriber to **The Icelandic Canadian** magazine since its beginning, and has no doubt felt a spiritual kinship with its aims and aspirations, and has wished to give his support to such work, which is all done on a voluntary basis. His fine generous gesture has given new momentum to the workers on the magazine and in the club, who are most grateful for this manifestation of appreciation from a man who was personally not known to the members. **H. D.**

Another Icelandic Novelist



Mrs. Kristine Kristofferson

The Ryerson Press, Toronto, has announced that it is in the process of publishing a novel, "Tanya", written by an Icelandic housewife, and mother of three pre-school age boys, Mrs. Kristine Kristofferson of Gimli, Manitoba.

The novel relates the experiences of a war nurse serving in World War II, who, after the war, returns to Canada to make her home in one of the sparsely settled communities on the shores of Lake Manitoba.

Mrs. Kristofferson recalls that her first interest in creative writing began at the tender age of twelve when her grade VI teacher offered a prize for the best original story written by a member of the class. This first attempt recounted the adventures and activities of three teen-age heroes who during their weekend exploits discovered a buried treasure, rounded up, captured and brought to justice a gang of jewel

thieves; and for good measure prevented a train wreck, saving the train from total destruction and its crew and passengers from certain death. The story, however, was judged to be lacking in realism and did not win the much coveted prize, an admission ticket to the play "Uncle Tom's Cabin".

Later when the author entered High School at Gimli her teacher Miss Sigurbjorg Stefansson praised her original compositions by reading some of them to her class and further encouraged her to write short stories.

As a result of such encouragement Kristine and her sister Benetta, now deceased, spent many weekends closeted in the attic of their home writing for a hobby. They produced numerous manuscripts now forgotten. It was not until last year that her interest in fiction writing was revived.

Mrs. Kristofferson began to write "Tanya" as a short story, but says that before she was aware of it so many characters had written themselves into the plot that she had to keep writing to unwind the entanglement. The result was a full length novel. She entered it in the Ryerson Fiction Award Contest last year, primarily for the purpose of obtaining competent professional criticism. Although it did not win the Ryerson Award Mrs. Kristofferson was asked to revise the book and re-submit it to the publishers, who then accepted it for publication.

At present Mrs. Kristofferson is revising her second novel "Jorunn". This novel has its setting in Iceland during the latter part of the 19th century. The scene later shifts to Gimli district during the period of early colonization there.

Mrs. Kristofferson, prior to her

marriage to Mr. Harold Kristofferson of Pinawa, was Miss Kristine Benson, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Gisli Benson, second generation pioneer in the Gimli district. She was educated at Gimli, obtained her First Class Teachers Certificate from the Manitoba Provincial Normal School at Winnipeg and subsequently taught for nine years in the Gimli Public School. During her

years as a teacher she wrote most of the childrens' plays that her classes performed at the annual school concerts.

"The Icelandic Canadian" takes this opportunity to congratulate Mrs. Kristofferson and wish her continued success with her future literary efforts.

J. K. L.

★

Wins Literary Award



Mrs. Helen Sigurdson won second prize in the Toronto Women's Club literary competition for 1950-51. She tied for second place with Mrs. Margaret Arnett MacLeod, also of Winnipeg, the award being \$25.00. First prize winner (\$50) was also a westerner, Helen Ramsay, a Prince Albert, Sask., kindergarten teacher.

Mrs. Sigurdson's prize winning effort is a children's story, called "Helga and the Skrælingar", with its setting in Big Island, Man. It is based on stories told to her by her mother-in-law, of early life in that pioneer settlement, and about their fear of the Indians.

Helen Sigurdson is the wife of Dr.

L. A. Sigurdson, one of our enthusiastic and energetic members of the Icelandic Canadian Club. Mrs. Sigurdson is also a member and has written stories and articles for our magazine. Helen Page grew up in Colorado, and graduated as B.Sc. from the University of Chicago. While studying for her Master's degree in Biology at Stanford University, Palo Alto, California, she met Larus, who was also studying for a master's degree, in Anatomy. They were married in 1928, and a year later emerged from Stanford, both proud possessors of a Master's Degree.

Winnipeg has been their home since 1931, when Dr. Sigurdson took up his work here as physician and surgeon. They have four children, and their daughter, Frances, Mrs. Giddings of Toronto, has just presented them with their first grandchild.

Mrs. Sigurdson is a member of the University Women's Club, The American Women's Club, and The Winnipeg Branch of the Canadian Authors' Association. "But", she says regretfully, "I have not much time to give to all these organizations. However we have a small local group of those interested in writing which we call 'The Manuscripters', and we meet regularly."

Wins in Short Story Contest



Highlight of the annual meeting of the Winnipeg Branch of the Canadian Authors' Association, held in April at the University Women's Club, was the awarding of the prize to **Mrs. Bodvar Johnson**, of Flin Flon, winner of the short story contest. The contest was sponsored by the Authors' Association with the prize money contributed by the Women's Canadian Club of Winnipeg. Mrs. Johnson won the \$50 award with her story, *The Curse of Manitou Wapow*. The cheque was presented to Miss Eunice Brown, of Winnipeg, cousin of Mrs. Johnson who was unable to be present to receive the award. This was the fourth successive year the club has made the award, and there were 46 entries. Judges were Mrs. Lillian Beynon Thomas, Mrs. Nan Shipley and Frank Williams.

Mrs. Thomas, in giving a short commentary on the stories submitted said she had been a judge each of the four contest years, and she found the writing this year to be much superior to that offered in the other contests. — "These authors wrote about the people around them. They dug their stories out of life. All stories had a Manitoba

background. The short story is a most artistic production and requires study and work." She said she hoped next year a prize would be awarded for playwrights.

Mrs. Johnson who writes under her maiden name of Bertha Danielson has had stories published in the *Icelandic Canadian* and other Canadian magazines. In our Spring issue of 1950, is her story, *On the Hoof*, and a short item about Mrs. Johnson herself. She was born in Swan River (Bowsman River), her parents being the pioneer settlers, Jonas and Johanna Danielson. Bertha taught school in Manitoba for fifteen years before her marriage, in 1944 to Bodvar Johnson, son of Snibjorn and Ingibjorg Johnson of Lundar, Man. Since then they have made their home at Flin Flon, where Mr. Johnson is engaged in fishing and freighting. He also had a lumber mill on Schits Lake, and Mrs. Johnson expects to go out there "for a couple of months to cook, and to gather material for another story." Her main interest is the great outdoors and she often accompanies her husband on his trips. She also takes an active part in the community life of Flin Flon, and has recently joined the Dramatic Guild. She is secretary of the Icelandic Canadian Ladies' Auxiliary, a group that has been functioning in Flin Flon for many years. "There are quite a number of Icelanders here," says Bertha, in her last letter to the *Icelandic Canadian*, "they are bankers, doctors, managers, miners, fishermen, etc., and many of them are subscribers of the *Icelandic Canadian*".

The *Icelandic Canadian* congratulates Bertha on her success and hopes to publish another story by her in the near future.

Icelandic Botanist to Join "U" Staff



Dr. Askill Love, eminent Icelandic botanist, has been appointed associate professor of botany at the University of Manitoba.

Announcing the appointment, Dr. A. H. S. Gillson, university president, said "this appointment has caused considerable interest among botanists throughout Canada and the University regards the addition of Professor Love to its staff as a very suitable one."

Dr. Love will begin work at the University in September.

The thirty-five year old botanist is born in Reykjavik, Iceland, and is a graduate of the University there. He is the son of Karl Löve, who is of Danish descent, and his wife Thora Jónsdóttir. She is a sister of Finnur Jónsson, a Winnipeg contractor who came from Iceland in 1908.

Dr. Love received the degrees of B. Sc., Ph.D. and D.Sc. from the University of Lund, Sweden, in botany, genetics and experimental taxonomy.

In 1940 he married Swedish-born Dr. Doris Wahlen, who is also a prominent botanist and collaborates with her

husband in many of his research projects.

In 1942 he taught at the University Institute of Applied Sciences in Reykjavik and three years later was named director of the institute of botany and genetics at the University of Iceland.

He has been secretary of the Association of Icelandic Naturalists since 1946 and is a fellow of the Icelandic Academy of Sciences and Letters.

He was one of 25 invited to the 11th International Phytogeographical Excursion through Ireland in 1949.

Dr. Love has made a number of investigational excursions through Lapland, England, Wales, Scotland, Sweden and Iceland. He is a frequent contributor of scientific articles to magazines and periodicals.

★

Visitor to Folk Festival

Mrs. H. T. Halvorson of Regina, Sask., was an interesting visitor to Winnipeg recently. She made a special effort to be here to see the Icelandic pageant, *The Symbol of Iceland*, shown at the Playhouse Theatre May 26, as the final feature in the four-day Folk Festival of the Young Men's Christian Association.

Mrs. Halvorson (Jona) is a daughter of the late Bjarni and Thorun Jonasson who resided for a long time at Hallson, N. D., and later at Gimli and Selkirk. During their last years they lived with their daughter Jona, at Regina, Sask. Bjarni passed away in 1930 and Thorun in 1933.

Jona (Jonasson) Halvorson was for many years an active member of the Lutheran church, and Young People's Societies, first in North Dakota and later in Selkirk. She was married in 1924 to Henry T. Halvorson of East-

end, Sask., who was at that time a member of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Halvorson died in 1943, whereupon Jona secured a position with the Dominion Government, so as to be able to help her daughters to secure a university education. This she has admirably accomplished. The oldest girl, Elsie May, having graduated in Home Economics, from the U. of M. in 1948. Elsie majored in teaching and has taught Home Economics in the city high schools at Trail, B. C. At present she is teaching in Regina.

The second daughter, Alene Thorun Halvorson, graduated in 1949 from

St. Olaf College at Northfield, Minn., majoring in English and Music. The same year she was married to Walter Moris of Fergus Falls, Minn., who is assistant to the Pastor of First Augustana Lutheran church in Minneapolis, where Alene is now Supervisor of Music in the city's public schools. Next year Mr. Moris will enter his senior year in theology at Augustana Seminary at Rock Island, Ill., and Alene will teach music in that city.

Mrs. Halvorson's youngest daughter, Ruth Halldora graduates from high school this year and intends to train for nursing.

GRADUATES

B.Sc. ENGINEERING

Sigurdur Gunnar Petursson, son of Mr. and Mrs. Olafur Petursson, of Winnipeg. **Gudmundur Peter Peterson** son of Mr. and Mrs. P. Rognvaldur Peterson, Oak View, Manitoba.

★

B.Sc. GENERAL COURSE

Sigrun Dolores Eylands, daughter of Rev. and Mrs. Valdimar Eylands, Winnipeg. **Daniel Halldor Johnson**, son of Mr. and Mrs. J. G. Johnson, Winnipeg. **Graham Robert Karl Thorkelson**.

★

MASTER OF SCIENCE

George Thomas Isford, son of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Isford, of Winnipeg, (see Icel. Can. June 1950).

★

B.Sc. ELECTRICAL ENG.

Jon Gudni Myrdal, son of Mr. and Mrs. Gudni and Gudrun Myrdal of Lundar, Man. He has a position with the E. G. Eggertson Inc. of Wpg. Consulting and Designing Engineers.

B. Sc. IN AGRICULTURE

Waldimar Wallace Bjarnason, son of Mr. and Mrs. Valdimar Bjarnason of Langruth, Man. **Hannes Asgeir Hallgrimson**, son of Mr. and Mrs. Thorsteinn Hallgrimson, Cypress River, Man. **William Ingvar Ragnar Johnson**. **Thomas Hermann Sigfusson**, son of Mr. and Mrs. Skuli Sigfusson, Lundar, Man. **Norman Valdimar Vigfusson**, son of Mr. and Mrs. Eirik Vigfusson, Selkirk, Man.

★

B.Sc. IN HOME ECONOMICS

Carol Gudridur Eyford

★

BACHELOR OF COMMERCE

Sigurdur Albert Helgason; **Thomas August Sigurdson**.

★

PUBLIC HEALTH NURSING

Evelyn Sigrun Thordarson

★

BACHELOR OF SOCIAL WORK

Kristrun June Bjornson

BACHELOR OF ARTS

Harry Arthur Jonasson; Gudrun Margaret Sigurdson; Joan Lousie Stephenson, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Harold Stephenson; **Holman Kristinn Olson**, of Selkirk.

★

LIEUT. IN ARMY

Arthur Glen Erlendson

GRADUATE NURSES

from Winnipeg General Hospital



Joan V. Beck, was awarded the Vancouver Chapter prize of \$50 for proficiency in Obstetrics, also Hon. Mention in General Work. She is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. J. T. Beck, of Winnipeg.

Dolores Johanna Johannesson, of Gimli, Man. was awarded the H. E. Sellers Scholarship, Winnipeg Chapter for Nursing proficiency, Canadian Nurse Journal Award, for demonstrating promise of Professional Growth. Daughter of Helgi and Maria Johannesson of Gimli, Manitoba.

★

HONORABLE MENTIONS

Ellen Sigurdson, Gimli, Man. **Emily Kristin Einarson**, daughter of Mrs. G. Einarson of Glenboro, Manitoba.

Also **Sigrun Lillian Anderson**, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. S. A. Anderson, Baldur, Man. now working at Dauphin Hospital; **Johanna Jonasson**, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Oli Jonasson, Wpg, **Ruby Magnusson**, Edmonton, Alta; **Sigrun Margaret Sigmar**, daughter of the late Stefan Sigmar and his wife Emily of Baldur, Man., now residing in Vancouver, B. C.; **Christine Ethel Swainson**, daughter of Mr. Ari Swainson and the late Mrs. Swainson, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Mr. H. V. Larusson, B.A. a member of the executive of the Icelandic Canadian Club is taking a leave of absence from his teaching duties at the Lord Selkirk Junior High School to spend a year in Europe. Mr. Larusson is sailing from Quebec to Liverpool on the Franconia July 4th. He expects to visit Iceland during the summer months and return to England in the fall to take a teaching position there during the coming school year. Mr. Larusson plans to visit Norway, Sweden, Denmark and other European countries as his time permits.

We wish Mr. Larusson a very pleasant and a profitable journey and hope that the readers of the Icelandic Canadian may have the pleasure of hearing from him regarding his travel impressions.

WILLIAM BENIDICKSON

Because of an error in the news item about Mr. Benidickson, the item is reprinted as follows:

William Benidickson, M.P. for Rainy River, Ontario, has been appointed parliamentary Assistant to Hon. L. Chevrier, Minister of Transport. Mr. Benidickson is of Icelandic descent, being the son of Christian and Gertrude Benidickson, 303 Cambridge St., Winnipeg.

IN THE NEWS

SEVEN BROTHERS AND SISTERS AT UNIVERSITY OF N. D.

The Grand Forks Herald recently featured on its front page, a picture and news item about seven brothers and sisters who are simultaneously attending the University of North Dakota at Grand Forks.

lowing in the footsteps of the other children, by attending the University of North Dak. An uncle of the young people, Dr. Albert F. Arnason of Bismark, also a graduate of the U. of N. D. is Commissioner for the State Board of Higher Education (No. Dak.).

The Arnason children are descend-



Front row, l. to r. A. Evonne, Gloria Ann, S. Elaine, and L. Eloise.

Back row—l. to r. A. E. Elray, Albert F. and Ray B. Arnason

—Cut by courtesy of "Heimskringla"

They are sons and daughters of Mr. and Mrs. Richard B. Arnason, and were born at Hensel N. D. where the family lived, before moving to Langdon and then to Grand Forks, where Mr. Arnason is a life insurance salesman.

Three of the sisters, Evonne, Elois and Elain are triplets, and are second year students, as well as two of the brothers, Albert and Elroy. Ray is graduating this year, while Gloria is in first year at the university.

An older brother Earl is a graduate in Law from the same university in 1943 and is in practice in Antioch, California. A foster-daughter, Mrs. Guy Bruner is a nurse in Seattle, and Harold, the youngest son, now eleven years old, will no doubt soon be fol-

lows in the footsteps of the other children, by attending the University of North Dak. An uncle of the young people, Dr. Albert F. Arnason of Bismark, also a graduate of the U. of N. D. is Commissioner for the State Board of Higher Education (No. Dak.).

★

ants of Hensel pioneers on both sides of the family. Richard's parents having been Arni Arnason and his wife Guðrún Baldvinsdóttir (a half-sister of professor Sveinbjorn Johnson), while Mrs. Arnason (Sigridur) is a daughter of Eiríkur Sæmundsson and his wife Thuríður Jónsdóttir, now both deceased.

EMINENT WPG. DOCTOR HEADS NAT. CANCER INST.

At a Medical Convention in Ottawa, on May 28, Dr. G. H. T. Thorlakson was elected the President of the National Cancer Institute of Canada.

Subscribe to this Magazine

WINS TRIP TO TORONTO



Miss Linda Hallson, third year student in Interior Design at the University of Manitoba, won the second prize of \$50. at the Dominion-wide Design Competition held in April by the Canadian Display Designers and Builders Association of Toronto.

Linda flew to Toronto June 3, to be the guest of the Association for the presentation of the Display Contest awards, which took place June 4, in the Reception Room of the Canadian International Trade Fair, where her prize-winning entry was on display at the exhibition booth for light textiles and clothing.

In Toronto, where Linda stayed at the Royal York Hotel, she was met by a representative of the Association and had the pleasure of going on a conducted tour of the display exhibits at the Fair.

Linda was leading lady in the University 'Players Dramatic Production' last November and received the plaudits of the press and public for her outstanding performance. (See Icel. Can.,

Winter, 1950). She is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Hallson of Winnipeg.

★

WINS ART SCHOLARSHIP

Helga Miller, 813 Dominion St., has been awarded one of five provincial art scholarships, each to the value of \$50 tuition at the Banff School of Fine Arts.

Winners in the competition were chosen from various zones in the four western provinces. Work was in charcoal, pastels, water and oil color.

Helga miller is the daughter of the late Rev. Guðm. Arnason, and his wife Sigridur Arnason, of Oak Point, Man. (See the "Timarit" 1951).

SHORT ITEMS

The Power system of the Krisuvik district, 22 miles from Reykjavik, Iceland's capital, hasn't its like in the rest of the world. It utilizes hot water springs deep in the earth. The steam, rises to a height of 230 feet and, by an eight-inch pipe comes from a depth of 750 feet.

The temperature is 392 degrees Fahrenheit and low-pressure turbines driving electrical generators produce 5,000 h.p. which, it is expected, will last forever. The steam column has now lasted four months and there is no sign of it ending. The noise is so great that it's deafening.

★

It is believed that the first European to visit North America was Leif Ericson who sailed from Iceland about the year 1000 A.D.

★

Victoria, capital of British Columbia, has the mildest climate of any city in Canada. It has an average winter daytime temperature of 42 degrees above zero. The annual rainfall is 27 inches, and average daily sunshine is more than five and one-half hours.

The Pageant of Iceland

The Icelandic Canadian Club, in accordance with the request of the officials of the Young Men's Christian Association, presented a pageant "The Symbol of Iceland", as a part of the Y. M.C.A. centenary celebration, which took the form of a Folk Festival, held at the Playhouse Theatre, Winnipeg, May, 23 — 26, 1951. Twenty-five ethnic groups participated in the four-day event, the Icelandic contribution being reserved for the final evening. The greater part of the programme consisted of national songs and dances, featuring colorful costumes. All these were very interesting, but the Icelandic pageant was lauded as something different, and outstanding in its beauty and significance.

The pageant was written by Mrs. Holmfridur Danielson and produced for the Jon Sigurdson Chapter, I.O.D. E. a year ago, and the Icelandic Canadian Club is indebted to the Chapter for its courtesy in permitting its use.

The Symbol of Iceland is an historical pageant, depicting in a series of colorful tableaux the preservation of the Icelandic literary heritage throughout the ages, and showing how the Icelandic immigrants in this country have cherished this inheritance passing it on from generation to generation, to succeed at last in giving Canada a share in this treasure, by establishing a chair of Icelandic language and literature at the University of Manitoba.

At the Playhouse Theatre the pageant was performed against a black velvet backdrop, with the beautiful and dignified **Fjallkona** and the other symbolic figures, in Icelandic costumes, being set off like cameos in a rich jewel case. In the last scene the lovely figure symbolizing Canada, on a high pedestal

in the foreground, in her white satin robe, gold crown and garland of gold maple leaves, was effectively set off against the deep toned background.

Synchronized with the action on the stage is the narration, with an accompaniment of soft music, telling the story of how the people of Iceland, through years of hardships and oppression, had yet preserved their integrity of character and their distinctive cultural tradition. The narration is interwoven with choral music pointing up the action of the drama, sung by a choir which was off stage.

As the curtain rises on the **Fjallkona** and her attendants, the choir hails her with the beautiful and dramatic song "**Fjallkonan**" (*Skyldi eigi úr Frónskum æðum streyma örar blóð*"), and the narrator continues with the story. As the Icelandic emigrants leave for the new world, they reverently receive from the **Fjallkona**, a finely bound book, symbolizing their heritage. Through the voice of the narrator she bids them a sad adieu, exhorts them to preserve their traditions and gives them her final blessing. When the emigrants have reached the distant shore, the strains of "*Pótt þú langföruð legðir*", express perfectly the mood of the scene.

The next scene depicts how the Icelandic people in America, along with others, rejoice with Iceland when sovereign independence is gained in 1944, and shows how they return to their **Fjallkona** to pay homage to her, and receive from her an illuminated scroll, symbolizing the literary heritage of Iceland. The scroll is passed from father to son, and presented ceremoniously to Canada. The impressive singing of "*O Guð vors lands*", and "*O,*

Canada", brings the pageant to its impressive climax.

Those taking part in the pageant were: Hulda (Guttormsson) Clarke, (Fjallkona); Elene Eylands, (Canada); Mrs. T. Finnbogason, Mrs. H. J. Petursson, Mrs. G. Finnbogason, Mrs. Sylvia (Guttormsson) Storey; Misses Thora Asgeirson, Viola Johnson, Evelyn Kristjanson; Messers, Wilhelm Kristjanson, Kristjan Sigurdson, Carl Thorsteinson, and Harold Johnson; and little Carlisle and Kerrine Wilson, children of Thelma and Kerr Wilson.

Members of the choral group were: Mrs. Pearl Johnson, Mrs. Unnur Simmons; Misses Ingibjorg Bjarnason, Mattie Halldorson, Villa Eyolfson, Lilia Eylands; and Messers, Albert Halldorson, Chris Einarson, Paul Sigurdson, Baldur Oliver, and Alvin Blondol. The choir was conducted by

Paul Bardal, M.L.A., with Miss Sigríð Bardal as pianist and Allan Beck violinist. The narration was ably and most effectively done by Alvin Blondal.

The Icelandic Canadian Club wishes to express the heartiest thanks to all the performers, for their splendid cooperation and excellent performance; to all the ladies who loaned their Icelandic costumes: Mrs. Thordis Fisher, Mrs. S. Oddson, Mrs. B. J. Brandson, Mrs. Petra Petursson, Miss Margret Petursson, Miss Ida Swainson, and Mrs. A. Blondal. Special thanks are due to Miss Swainson and Mrs. Blondal, who not only loaned their costumes, but generously gave their time to help in the dressing rooms for the performance and the dress rehearsal; to the committee, and to Mrs. Danielson, for her highly efficient direction of the pageant.

W. K.

MANITOBA MEANS BUSINESS!

Manitoba industry is now at the highest peak in its history . . . production is proceeding at above normal levels . . . business in Manitoba is expanding rapidly . . . construction is at peak level. Expectation of still greater expansion in the years ahead is therefore fully justified.



The Department of industry and Commerce is fully equipped to supply complete information on industrial and commercial Manitoba.

DEPARTMENT of INDUSTRY and COMMERCE

LEGISLATIVE BLDG., WINNIPEG, MAN.

HON. J. S. McDIARMID, Minister

R. E. GROSE, Director

Freighter Braves Ice, Cold To Set New Hauling Record

By Elman Guttormson

★

A Canadian track and field champion recently chalked up another record—only this time it's for hauling freight by crawler tractors to remote places in northern Manitoba and Ontario.

Sveinn Sigfusson, veteran northern freighter of eight years, this winter completed a 2,080-mile trip, the longest ever made in the northland by tractor.



The tractor "train", hauling merchandise to lonely outposts, made a round trip from Winnipeg to Ilford, Man., on the Hudson Bay railway line. Points to stop on the way to Ilford, 600 air miles from Winnipeg, were Riverton, Berens River, Island Lake, Sandy Lake, Ont., Red Sucker Lake and God's Lake.

On the return trip the "train" travelled 250 miles east of Red Sucker, near the Manitoba-Ontario border, to Trout Lake.

Mr. Sigfusson stressed that his mileage was tractor miles. In rough terrain, he said, two tractor miles might equal only one air mile.

The "train" was trouble-free until it started breaking a new trail on the return trip from Island Lake direct to

Berens River. On three successive days they lost tractors through the ice.

The first day a tractor was lost in the Cobham river. The crew had it salvaged and running in five hours. Next day the same tractor went through the ice on Mink Lake. This time it took eight hours to salvage the machine and get it in operation.

On the third day the smallest tractor of the "train" went through the ice 16 miles north of Poplar river.

"Because the ice was becoming very rotten and unsafe I didn't dare waste any time trying to retrieve it. I'll get it out next year," said Mr. Sigfusson.

During eight years of freighting in the north, the Icelandic champion has salvaged 20 tractors from the frigid waters of northern lakes. One was in 100 feet of water in Reindeer lake. "I was lucky to get that one out", he said.

Tractors used in the "train" are valued at between \$5,000 and \$10,000 each.

The "train" was made up of four tractors, each pulling five sets of sleighs.

During the trip, which took a month, the tractors travelled day and night and never stopped running, except for the changing of oil every 120 hours. Each tractor was equipped with two drivers and a "brakie". The drivers worked in six-hour shifts.

According to Mr. Sigfusson, a thickness of 12 inches of ice is needed for safe travelling on the smaller lakes. On the large lakes, like Lake Winnipeg, 18 inches of ice are required because of large cracks which form during cold weather.

Crew members on the trip were Gun-

nar Eyolfson, Leifur Einarson, Bill Stinson (cook), Fjolnir Goodman, Magnus (Mickey) Bergthorson, Torfi Oddson and Thor Johnson, all of Lundar; Johnny Forsythe, of Eriksdale; Len Calder and Roy McLennan, of Riverton; Tache Everett, of Berens River; Clarence Hemming of Winnipeg and Snorri Rognvaldson, of Iceland, who arrived in Winnipeg the day before the "train" left.

Mr. Sigfusson, in charge of the trip, said it was the "best" crew he had ever had.

There were no casualties on that trip although Len Calder almost lost his life when he went down with the third tractor. Leifur Einarson who was with him at the time said, "I was sure he had drowned, he was under so long".

The tractor train is the property of Sigfusson Transportation company, 822 Lipton street, co-owned by brothers Sveinn and Skuli Sigfusson.

They are the sons of Skuli Sigfusson of Lundar, who was the Liberal member of the constituency of St. George for 24 years. Mr. Sigfusson, who retired in 1945, had held his seat for a longer period than any other member at that time.

The 38 year-old athlete, who stands six feet four inches and weighs 210 pounds, has won several Canadian championships in the hammer and discus throw. He has also won the grand aggregate at the Scottish sports in Winnipeg seven times. In 1938 he set a Canadian record in the discus throw.

Last year he represented Canada at the British Empire Games in Auckland, New Zealand.

He hopes to make the Canadian team which will represent Canada at the Olympics next year.

In the summer he takes his crew to

Saskatchewan where he is engaged in construction work on the trans-Canada highway.

—Winnipeg Free Press.

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DR. NIELS FINSEN, DISCOVERER OF ARTIFICIAL SUNLIGHT

(Continued from Page 15)

possible he would study out in the sun and open air or in the room of a fellow student and use his own gloomy abode merely to sleep in. All these observations proved an incentive later on to study, most searchingly, the action and influence of light on the health of human beings.

Finally he proved to his own satisfaction that ultra-violet rays caused changes in the blood, resulting in a higher percentage of red cells at the end of a summer. Highly orthodox medical men considered him a crank and their scorn and unbelief was augmented when he, having argued that certain rays of the sun's spectrum are bacteria destroying, and others of a healing nature, turned right around and proved that under certain conditions **sunlight might be deadly** to human beings. This applied to small-pox patients. Dr. Finsen insisted that it was evident that ultra-violet rays were to blame for the small-pox blisters becoming inflamed and infected. "Don't you see," he said, "that the blisters on the body, which is covered, heal naturally, while those on the face and hands, which are exposed to light, are the ones that leave the ugly disfiguring scars."

Dr. Finsen published a paper on this fantastic new theory, advising that small-pox patients be kept shut up in rooms with thick red drapes at the windows, that would shut out the chemical blue, violet and ultra-violet rays, while admitting the red rays. Although the polite doctors at the Blegdam Hospital in Copenhagen only raised their eyebrows somewhat sarcastically, this theory was soon tried out in Norway and Sweden and proved completely effective, resulting in the

prevention of infection and blood poisoning, and consequently no disfiguring scars were left on the skin.

With the publication of his first paper on the action of light upon small-pox, Finsen became famous. He might well have rested on the high reputation he had now earned, as by this time he was a confirmed invalid, at the age of thirty-three. His heart, liver, and the organs of digestion being so hopelessly deranged that active practice was impossible. Periodically, great quantities of excess fluid in his abdomen had to be tapped off. To counteract to some extent this condition he lived mainly on a diet of dried foods. Shipments of seaweed stems were sent to him from the Faroe Islands, as they could absorb six to seven times their weight in water. He took frequent sun baths and eventually had a sun room built on the top of his house, where he could lie in the sun and store up a little energy in order to continue his research.

After 1893, Dr. Finsen was relieved of the necessity of teaching and enabled to devote all his attention and energy, when health permitted, to his investigations in the nature and properties of light, and its application to the treatment of various diseases. For this man, whose own tender heart was gradually being encased with mysterious lime salts, wealth and a life of ease had no charm; he declined to make money out of his discoveries, or to patent any part of his apparatus; he was well content with his modest salary of 1,200 dollars from the Danish Government.

To develop the positive element of light-ray cure, Finsen now began to experiment with artificial light-rays.

After months of research he found it possible to concentrate ordinary electric light rays so that they would kill bacteria. He felt certain that it would be possible to apply this method to curing **lupus vulgaris**, (tuberculosis of the skin).

With this in mind he went to the Copenhagen faculty again and now the doctors were somewhat impatient with this persistent "dabbler in light cures". Was it not highly illogical, they said, of a man who had proved that the blue, violet and ultra-violet rays were damaging to the blisters of small-pox patients, to try to convince them that these very same rays would be good for lupus. Besides it was most impractical, how were you going to get enough sunlight in Denmark in the dull days of November?

Perhaps no one had felt more keenly than Finsen himself the pitiful lack of sunlight in Copenhagen during the foggy winter months. **But he would make his own sun!** But how was he to demonstrate his theories? For like many another inventor and scientist he found himself almost totally handicapped by the disbelief and ridicule of professional men and public alike, even his own maternal grandmother shaking her head sadly and saying, — "Now our Niels thinks he is going to cure people with light. What next!"

Well, if the doctors would not help him, perhaps an engineer might prove more sympathetic and understanding! So Dr. Finsen hastened to Winfeld Hansen, chief engineer of the city's electric light works, and explained to him that he needed a carbon arc light, but much stronger than the lights used for street lighting—it had to be strong enough to cause inflammation, like ordinary sunburn.

It was fortunate for Finsen and for all humanity, that Hansen was not a

doctor and consequently was open to the persuasion of a fanatical inventor. More fortunate still was the coincidence that Hansen had a friend, Morgensen by name, who was also an engineer, and who had suffered for eight years from the loathsome and dreaded lupus vulgaris with its billions of tubercle bacilli eating into the healthy skin on his face and turning it into a ghastly incurable sore.

Not only did Finsen get his arc light from Hansen, clumsy and inadequate though it was, he also got Morgensen, —as a willing and hopeful patient! Hansen, who had said laughingly to Finsen, "We can't have your patients running around the electric light plant", nevertheless, allowed him to set up his equipment, and here Morgensen sat, for two hours every day from November 1895 till the middle of March 1896, enduring stoically the painful rays of this weird blue light,—for it was not until later that Finsen developed the process of cooling the lenses by having water flow between them.

These were anxious times for the three men. Hansen, worried about this unorthodox procedure in his plant; Morgensen sweating and suffering and hoping against hope that this fantastic light treatment would cure, or at least alleviate, the disfiguring disease which made him ashamed to be seen by his fellow men; and Finsen trembling in anticipation! Would they be successful? For more than a month there was no change, Morgensen was ready to give up, but Finsen never dreamed of quitting, begging Morgensen to endure the treatment yet a little longer.

Little by little the ugly sores cleared up, and finally Morgensen could blissfully look at his face in a mirror and see that he had been cured of the incurable skin tuberculosis!

Finsen would not accept a single 'krone' from Morgensen, in payment for the cure. It had been, he said, in the nature of an experiment, but a few years later when Finsen was in great need of a rest, Morgensen who had become his lifelong friend, induced him to spend a few weeks at a health resort, at his own expense.

The sensational cure attracted wide attention, and two Copenhagen manufacturers, Jørgensen and Hagemann, spearheaded a campaign to organize what was to become known as **The Finsen Light Institute**.

In 1896 the Municipal Hospital of Copenhagen gave space on its grounds for the first building, an inadequate one-storey wooden structure which during the ensuing years expanded and became a group of wooden shacks. The board of directors was composed of business men and four university professors which definitely stamped the Institute with academic approval, so that moral and financial support was now forthcoming to the young scientist. The board insisted on paying Finsen a salary in spite of his outlandish protests that he would not take a cent until his theories had been fully proved.

But how he worked! Conscious of the fact that the sands of time were running low for him, he plunged in while the carpenters' were still busy putting the finishing touches to the place!

There was so much to do, so many obstacles to overcome, and alas, so little time! It was heartbreaking for Finsen to have people flocking to his wooden shack only to give up in disgust before the treatment could take effect. The lamps were too slow,—and too painful. Perhaps only the real sunlight could effect a cure. And so the patients lay about the garden, with

nurses pressing a piece of glass to their sore-infected faces, in order to drive out the blood so that the light-rays could penetrate faster. Side by side these two experiments went on, while Finsen worked and worried feverishly, and fought to keep his patients from quitting. It was truly an adverse advertisement for the Institute when patients went away with their still disfigured faces and proved they had **not been cured** after all.

The rays of the carbon arc light were too hot. Finsen groped and pondered and subjected himself to endless experiments. He must find a way to keep those rays from painfully burning the patients while yet they were strong enough to effect a cure! One day he held his arm in the focus of his artificial sun, and at the same time poured water over the spot on his skin where it had started to burn. Then a wonderful thing happened! The burning vanished, and he found he could endure the highly concentrated light of the lamp, **because the water blocked out the heat rays**.

At last he had found the solution! It was but a step to install the apparatus that would allow water to flow between those quartz lenses of his artificial sun, so that its concentrated rays could now heal the tuberculosis sores much faster. In two years, while Finsen sat in his wheel chair no longer able to walk, he and his assistants at the Institute sent away 510 patients cured, and over one hundred were on the waiting list.

Experts from many lands came to Copenhagen to study the Finsen method of curing lupus vulgaris. From Russia came the Dowager Empress, Maria Feodorovna (her given name was Dagmar and she was the daughter of King Christian IX, of Denmark, and a sister of Queen Alexandra, consort of King

Edward VII. of England). With her she brought a group of Russian scientists to study for six weeks at the Finsen Institute. The Empress had many personal interviews with Dr. Finsen, who was, however too ill to receive but a few of the visitors who came from other countries, because of their interest in this wonderful new science.

. . .

Then in 1901, the Danish Government erected a fine new Finsen Institute at Rosenvaenget, a pleasant suburb of Copenhagen. It was opened August 12, 1901 and was called 'Rosenvang'. Here the new and enlarged apparatus,—the high-powered Finsen lamp,—was used under the supervision of a staff of physicians of national renown, expert electricians, and specially trained nurses, under Finsen's direction.

The Finsen light was a large, specially constructed, direct-current arc lamp of 40,000 candle power, or forty times stronger than the ordinary arc street lamp, and used from sixty to eighty ampiers of current of 110 voltage. This lamp burned a specially made carbon, the upper holder containing a large carbon, while a smaller one was used in the lower holder, with the death fighting energy being transmitted from the crater of the positive carbon. The lenses were made of quartz and were cooled by letting water flow between them. The pressure glass was hollow and was also water-cooled.

Many and spectacular were the cures effected at the Institute of cases previously deemed utterly hopeless, and the fame of Finsen's work spread through every civilized country. Honors were heaped upon him from all directions. A dinner was given in his honor by King Christian IX of Denmark at the close of which the king conferred

upon Finsen the Order of the Knight of the Dannebrog. It was an impressive ceremony with one of the beautiful princesses presenting the decoration to him as a token of gratitude from the king and all his loyal subjects.

On December 10, 1903 the Nobel Prize in Medicine was awarded to Finsen. That year the coveted award was also won by Björnsterne Björnson, in Literature and by Drs. Pierre and Mary Curie in Physics.

There was much excitement at Rosenvang with extensive celebrations, and a shower of telegrams, letters and floral offerings. Finsen was too ill to receive visitors, but he must receive the consul for Sweden and Norway, bringing him the Nobel Prize, a cheque for 141,000 Danish crowns and a large gold medal. The president of the Medical Association brought a document signed by all the leading doctors, congratulating him and expressing their appreciation. Hagemann, Superintendent of the Finsen Institute, with a small committee called on Finsen as he sat in his wheel chair with Ingeborg by his side. Speaking for the staff of seventy-eight members he said in part: "It is only in the realm of the mind that small countries can win victories, but are they not, after all, the best ones and the most valuable for humanity?" He also announced that Dr. Finsen had given 50,000 kroner of the Nobel Prize money to the Institute. An announcement was later made that Hagemann and Jørgensen, the originators and constant benefactors of the Institute, had on this occasion given 50,000 kr., each, to further its good work.

Returning to the Institute, the chief medical officer took Finsen's greetings to the staff, and announced that in keeping with Finsen's wishes, an extra month's salary would be given to

each member of the staff in appreciation of their efficiency and co-operation, to commemorate this occasion.

Finsen, who had been furnished beforehand with all speeches made by officials and dignitaries, on the awarding of the Nobel Prize to him, had prepared an address in reply; but he was too ill to read it. With his customary modesty he disclaimed any credit for himself, his paper reading in part:

"If I considered this great honor, the Nobel Prize, being bestowed on myself personally, I could not readily accept these congratulations,, due to the fact that the achievement, which is thus being compensated, is only in a small measure my work. It is largely the work of the executive, the doctors and the staff as a whole, supported by grants from the city, the government and individuals. I consider that the Nobel Prize has been awarded to me in my capacity as medical representative of the Light Institute, and as such, it is a profound pleasure for me to accept your generous congratulations".

. . .

The world had now recognized the immense value of Finsen's death-fighting, man-made sun, but he himself did not for an instant forget the great healing power of the sun itself!

It was during the family's last holiday together at the seaside in the summer of 1904, that Finsen concentrated his efforts on vast plans for treating those doomed with tuberculosis, with sun-baths all over their bodies. The powerful arc-light, too, would be used for that purpose as well as for healing localized spots of infection. While Ingeborg pushed his wheel chair along the beach, he would think long thoughts about his earliest theories on the life-giving elements of the sun-light. Back at their cottage, he would

rest awhile in the cool of the evening and listen to some of his records of classical music, of which he had a wide selection. To satisfy his longing for good music, he had many years before, imported from Paris the best Edison phonograph that could be had. His favorite record now was Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, that magnificent tonal triumph inspired by Schiller's immortal poem, "Ode to Joy". The poet in Finsen thrilled to the beautiful tones. He had always felt that music released the inner tensions, as did sunset, sunrise, northern lights and a starlit sky. "All these," he said, "have a similar effect on the soul,—the tenderness of the soul! This I would wish to possess until I die."

But there was work to be done. All his magnificent plans had to be written down and carefully revised, and now he could no longer write himself, only scribble a few notes at intervals. But there was one beside him who would be to the end, his inspiration, guide, nurse and even secretary. That person was Ingeborg, the loving wife and mother of his three children, whose constant courage, sacrifice and devotion had shone like a beacon light along the lonely path of this struggling young scientist, burdened with ill-health, and often with discouragement! Little credit has been given to this self-sacrificing woman, but Finsen himself realized that he was dependent on her moral support, sympathy and understanding, and that without her efficient help the success of his aims could not have been achieved.

During the latter part of that summer, according to his wishes, she was with him constantly, ministering to his slightest wish. She re-wrote for him his scribbled notes, and in the evening she would sit patiently taking down the revised version of his ideas in her

neat hand. If he stopped to rest she could always pick up some knitting or sewing for the children, until he had labouriously worked out some angle of his plans for her to put on paper.

It was a sort of testament he left with her, to be bequeathed, through her, to a suffering humanity. It was at the end of that summer, September 24, that Finsen died. The soggy blanket of fall mists was just beginning to spread from the North Sea to obliterate the sun that he loved. But perhaps he could see in his mind's eye, a vision of the midnight sun in Iceland, the land of his father, where the golden sunset merges into the glorious sunrise of a new day!

After Finsen's death the Institute marked time for a decade or more, as if some spiritual spark had left it with his passing. Yet slowly the fame of his work was spreading through every civilized country. Its echo reached the mountains of Switzerland where, like a clarion call resounding from peak to peak, the good word was passed from one scientist to another, from Bernard to Rollier, and from Rollier to his pitiful flock of t.b. patients, whom he started marching almost in the nude, up hill and down dale in the brilliant mountain sunshine. Carefully, little by little, he charged their bodies with the disease-resisting mystery of sunlight, and sent them home cured.

Finally the torch was taken up by Dr. Ove Strandberg, and it was this tough, though somewhat disbelieving Danish scientist, who had the courage to use Finsen's man-made sun on patients suffering from various types of tuberculosis, and thus proved successful in curing t.b. of the throat, joints and bones, with light rays.

Dr. Niels Ryberg Finsen was the first

determined and relentless fighter of death and disease by means of sunlight. In this work he was far ahead of his time, and thirty years ahead of Willis R. Whitney, the Schenectady chemical engineer, who with his discoveries opened up the way for combating another devastating disease of humanity. To the medical profession Finsen's ideas and theories seemed bizarre and impractical, and it is not surprising that it took a long time before they would even listen to him.

"What is more astounding," says Paul De Kruif, "is our own modern negligence to make thorough use of what he discovered. His machine substitute for the sun's life-giving light is the most powerful single weapon now existing for the death fight against all kinds of tuberculosis".

Reproduction of photograph of Dr. Finsen by courtesy of Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc., Publishers, New York.

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